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THE TRENDS JOURNAL®

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

YOU HATE ISRAELI GENOCIDE

YOU'RE AN ANTISEMITE

HEIL, AMERIKA...

WE'LL PUT YOU IN JAIL

8 April 2025

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About the TRENDS JOURNAL

Gerald Celente is the Founder/Director of the Trends Research Institute and Publisher of the weekly **Trends Journal** magazine. He is the author of the highly acclaimed and best-selling books *Trend Tracking* and *Trends 2000* (Warner Books).

With a 40-year track record of identifying, tracking, and forecasting trends, Celente is world-renowned as today's #1 Trend Forecaster. Celente has earned the reputation as a trusted name in trends for his many accurate forecasts; among them the 1987 Stock Market crash, Dot com bust, "Gold Bull Run," the "Panic of '08," the rise of organic foods, and the popularity of gourmet coffee long before Starbucks was a household name.

Self-described as a "Warrior for the Prince of Peace," Gerald Celente is also the Founder "Occupy Peace & Freedom," a not-for-profit movement to honor the Constitution and Bill of Rights and restore Freedoms.

INSIDE

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT 7

ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW 7

U.S. ECONOMY ADDS MORE LOW PAYING JOBS IN MARCH 20

SERVICE SECTOR ACTIVITY IN MARCH SLOWEST IN NINE MONTHS 23

WALL STREET BARONS LOSE HOPES FOR TRUMP'S PROMISED "GOLDEN AGE" 24

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT 26

WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS JOBS GO WITH IT 26

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS TRENDS 28

OPEC+ WILL BOOST OUTPUT IN MAY AS OIL PRICES TANK 31

CAR MARKET UPSET: BYD SETS SALES RECORD, TESLA SLUMPS 32

SPECIAL REPORT: TRUMP'S TARIFFS, THE UPS AND DOWNS, FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE 34

TRUMP "LIBERATES" U.S. WITH WORLDWIDE TRADE WAR 35

WORLD ECONOMY IN TURMOIL AS TARIFFS TAKE HOLD 38

TRADE WAR LIKELY TO THROW U.S. INTO RECESSION, ECONOMISTS WARN 41

EUROPE GRAPPLES WITH TARIFF IMPACTS 43

"FACTORY ASIA" FACES SEVERE DAMAGE IN TARIFF WAR, ANALYSTS SAY 44

NEW TARIFFS PROMPT FITCH TO DOWNGRADE CHINA'S BOND RATING 46

NEW TARIFFS DRIVE DOWN PRICES FOR OIL AND METALS 49

COUNTRIES TRY TO ESCAPE TARIFFS BY APPEASING TRUMP WITH CONCESSIONS 50

U.S. BOND YIELDS SINK UNDER WEIGHT OF TARIFFS 52

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER 54

SMALLER DEALS ABOUND IN BRISK M&A MARKET 54

COLONIAL PIPELINE SOLD TO BROOKFIELD FOR $9 BILLION 55

BROOKFIELD BUYS LAB EQUIPMENT MAKER FOR $1.4 BILLION 56

BROOKFIELD BUYS CONTROL OF MORTGAGE COMPANY 56

GUATEMALAN CONGLOMERATE BUYS HARVEST HILL'S BEVERAGE FAMILY 57

HERSHEY BUYS COMPANY THAT MAKES HEALTHIER SNACKS 58

AD FIRM BUYS CLOUD COLLABORATION SOFTWARE COMPANY 59

THE ISRAEL WAR 60

WAR ON CHILDREN: 100 CHILDREN KILLED OR INJURED A DAY SINCE GENOCIDE RESUMES IN GAZA, UN SAYS 60

SETTLER RAMPAGE ON WEST BANK VILLAGE NOT TERRORISM, KATZ SAYS 63

ISRAEL RAMPS UP WAR AGAINST SYRIA 66

NO OUTRAGE: IDF BOMBS UN CLINIC IN NORTHERN GAZA, KILLING 22, INCLUDING 9 CHILDREN 70
TRUMP IS PREPARING TO BOMB IRAN, REPORT SAYS 72
LONDON POLICE RAID QUAKER BUILDING TO BREAK UP ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTEST GROUP 76
PROOF: ISRAEL INTENTIONALLY MASSACRES PALESTINIAN EMERGENCY WORKERS 78
ISRAEL RAMPS UP GAZA GENOCIDE 81
ISRAELI GENOCIDE: PALESTINIANS WILL BE REMOVED FROM GAZA 83
CO-SPONSORS OF GENOCIDE: U.S. SENATE REJECTS RESOLUTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE BLOCKED BILLIONS IN WEAPONS TO ISRAEL 85
HUNGARY EMBRACES GENOCIDE KING NETANYAHU, WITHDRAWS FROM THE ICC 88
ISRAEL RAMPS UP WAR AGAINST SYRIA AND LEBANON AS NETANYAHU VISITS WHITE HOUSE 90
GAZA DEATH TOLL 93
FEATURED TRENDS GUEST ARTICLES 97
THE UNITED STATES HAS BECOME A TWO-TIER COUNTRY 97
LET'S NOT FORGET 104
MICROPLASTICS ACCUMULATE IN YOUR BRAIN MORE THAN OTHER ORGANS 108
TRENDS IN THE MARKETS 118
A PLEA FOR ACTION AND AWARENESS: THE HYPER-DEBT BUBBLE AND THE COMING SYSTEM LOCK-UP 118
TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY 122
'NEUROMARKETING' WILL PUT THE SQUEEZE ON YOUR MIND TO EAT GMO AND GE CITRUS 122
HUMANOIDS SET TO EXPLODE AS HUMAN POPULATIONS IMPLODE: THE POST-HUMAN FEVER DREAM CONTINUES 126
COVID CAME FROM WUHAN LAB, FRENCH ACADEMY OF MEDICINE (UNBOLDLY) DECLARES 145
TECHNOCRACY BRIEFS: EV GO FU STUNS WASHINGTON POST, AND MORE EVIDENCE AI COPYRIGHT THEFT 148
EV GO FU WAS UNDERWAY BEFORE TRUMP 148
NEW STUDY: COPYRIGHTED CONTENT WAS "MEMORIZED" BY GEN AI 149
TRENDS IN CRYPTOS 153
SEC LAYS OUT STABLECOINS NOT CLASSED AS SECURITIES 153
TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS 156
MERZ ALLY: GERMANS WHO AREN'T AFRAID OF RUSSIAN THREAT ARE IN 'DENIAL' 156
U.K. WANTS MULTILATERAL FUND IN EUROPE TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT 159
PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW® 161
U.S. SENDS MILITARY ASSETS TO IRAN'S DOORSTEP 161
U.S. STRIKES ON HOUTHIS INEFFECTIVE AND EXPENSIVE 164
HARVARD COULD LOSE $9 BILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING IF IT DOESN'T BOW TO TRUMP 167
PRINCETON LATEST SCHOOL TO

SEE FUNDING STRIPPED FOR SUPPORTING FREE-SPEECH AND ALLOWING ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTESTS 170
'HANDS OFF!' RALLIES BREAK OUT ACROSS THE U.S. TO PROTEST MUSK / TRUMP...NOT A PEEP ABOUT THE U.S.-BACKED GENOCIDE 173
TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE 176
CHINA APPROVES PILOTLESS ROBOTAXIS FOR COMMERCIAL OPERATION 176
A TOUGH NEW KIND OF PLASTIC THAT DISSOLVES IN SALT WATER 178
PRODUCTION BEGINS ON FIRST LIGHT-POWERED NEURAL COMPUTER CHIP 180
TRENDS IN AI 183
TODAY'S AI ARCHITECTURE CAN NEVER ACHIEVE AGI, MOST RESEARCHERS SAY 183
NEW TEST SHOWS WHETHER AN AI IS LIKELY TO CAUSE "CATASTROPHIC HARM" 186
DEEPSEEK RECASTS CHINA'S AI INDUSTRY 188
OPENAI IS NOW AMONG THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE COMPANIES 190
MICROSOFT HALTS DATA CENTER PROJECTS IN FOUR COUNTRIES 191
AI DRUG DESIGN FIRM RAISES $600 MILLION 193

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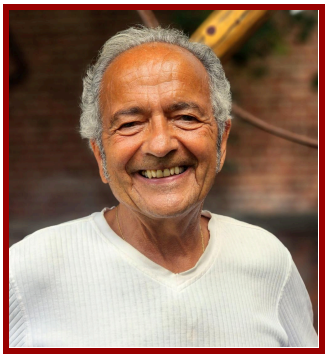


HEIL, AMERIKA...WE'LL PUT YOU IN JAIL

Welcome to this week's **Trends Journal**: **"YOU HATE ISRAELI GENOCIDE YOU'RE AN ANTISEMITE...HEIL, AMERIKA...WE'LL PUT YOU IN JAIL"**

Israel has benefitted from U.S. government support in Israel's Gaza War. This support, however, comes with significant consequences, including the suppression of voices that oppose Israel's genocide.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Donald Trump at the White House yesterday with a lot to be thankful for. In the first few months of his presidency, Trump supercharged Washington's support for Israel, with one of his first moves to lift the Biden-era hold on 2,000-pound bombs because of concerns about civilian casualties.

Trump's administration has also taken steps to punish colleges that permit anti-genocide protests and the students who took part in them, threatening to withdraw federal funding from institutions that do not comply. This move indirectly supports Netanyahu's stance, as he emphasized the intellectual battle being fought in Western academic circles during a recent conference on antisemitism.

Besides the financial Armageddon on these colleges, the Trump administration has detained several foreign students in the U.S. over their ties to college protests although they have not been charged with crimes, sending a stark warning to others about the consequences of opposing Israel's slaughter of Palestinians and bombing Gaza into ruins.

On the Economic Front

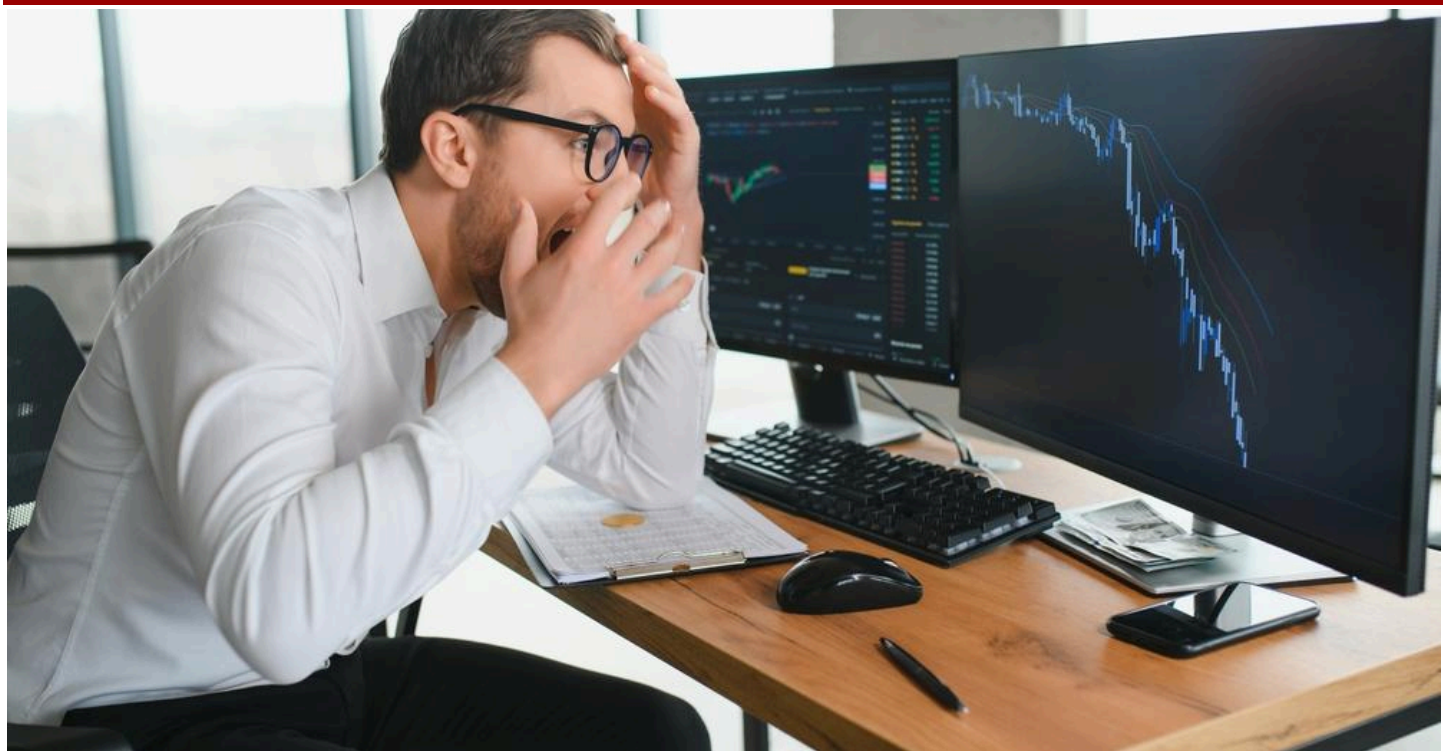
U.S. stocks ended the day lower as trade tensions between U.S., and China ramp up. This week's issue provides an in-depth analysis of the sectors most likely to be impacted if the trade conflict escalates.

To access the magazine content, go to www.trendsjournal.com and sign in with your username and password. You can click on individual articles, download the PDF, peruse the Flip Book, and read it in different languages.

Sincerely,

Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team

TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT



ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW

As we had forecast, two of our Top Trends for 2025 are The Wild Card and The Trump Card, and day-after-day, those cards are being dealt. And who plays them and where they go, nobody knows.

After steep losses in the equity markets—which wiped out nearly $7 trillion in stock values last week—there was a slight bounce back yesterday and today in the U.S. and sharper upward spikes in the EU and Asian markets.

But again, another day another day of guessing. While the U.S. equities were on a high earlier in the day—the Dow was up some 1,400 points—following the announcement by the White House that they would impose a 104 percent tariff on

Chinese products, and it will take effect at midnight, the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq slipped into negative territory.

In response to the latest round in the Tariff War, today U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Box" that "I think it was a big mistake, this Chinese escalation, because they're playing with a pair of twos. What do we lose by the Chinese raising tariffs on us? We export one-fifth to them of what they export to us, so that is a losing hand for them."

This was in response to China's vow yesterday that they will not bow to Trump's tariffs and will "fight to the end." And, in the beginning of "the end" they imposed a 34 percent tariff on U.S. products. This is a big deal for China, because if they are not doing business with the U.S., it will prove very costly. Last year about a third of the U.S. trade deficit, some $300 billion, was from buying "Made-in-China" products.

Today, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said that "We will not let anyone take away the Chinese people's legitimate right to development. We will not tolerate any attempt to harm China's sovereignty, security and development interests. We will continue to take resolute and strong measures to safeguard our legitimate rights and interests."

So the question becomes, as we see it, will we move from Trade War to War with China?

As Gerald Celente notes, "When all else fails, they take you to war."

As reported by *South China Morning Post* yesterday:

> **Beijing's military drills around Taiwan are 'destabilizing', G7 says**
>
> *In a joint statement on Sunday, G7 diplomats said exercises 'put at risk global security and prosperity', urged peaceful resolution of issues.*

Foreign ministers from the G7 (Group of Seven major advanced economies) called mainland China's recent military drills around Taiwan provocative and destabilizing while urging dialogue for "peaceful resolution of issues".

"These increasingly frequent and destabilizing activities are raising cross-Strait tensions and put at risk global security and prosperity," the top diplomats said in a joint statement on Sunday.

"G7 members continue to encourage the peaceful resolution of issues through constructive cross-Strait dialogue."

Last week, mainland China's military concluded two-day war games around Taiwan in which it held long-range, live-fire drills in the East China Sea, marking an escalation of exercises around the island.

The combat drills are fueling fears that one day a military exercise could escalate into a real attack by the People's Liberation Army.

Beijing views Taiwan as part of China and has not ruled out the use of force to reunify it with the mainland.

During his trip to Japan at the end of March, U.S. Defense Secretary Peter Hegseth said that "America is committed to sustaining robust, ready and credible deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, including across the Taiwan Strait."

No Recession – Recession

There is growing worldwide fear that the Tariff War will bring on a recession throughout the world and bring down their equity markets. Yesterday, Peter Navarro, the White House senior trade advisor, appearing on Fox, said the market is "finding a bottom now, but it … look, here's the thing … it's going to shift over, and it's going to be companies in the S&P 500 who are the first to produce here. Those are the ones that are going to lead the recovery."

And as for not only the equity markets swinging higher, he also forecasts there will be no recession. He said, “And it’s going to happen, Dow 50,000, I guarantee that, and I guarantee no recession, OK? Why? Because when we pass the biggest, broadest tax cut in history within a matter of months, that’s going to be a great stimulus.” Navarro also predicted that because of the big drop in oil prices and lower treasury yields and mortgage rates, “There’s not going to be any inflation.”

As for his mortgage rate decline, so far he got it wrong. As we go to press the average mortgage rate of 6.85 percent hit its highest level in over a month as, according to Mortgage News Daily, the rate on the 30-year fixed mortgage went up 22 basis points yesterday and up 3 basis points today.

And as for **Recession or No Recession**, the way Navarro and the White House see it is not the way The Street sees it. See:

- **CBS NEWS (4/7/2025)**
  “Jamie Dimon, Wall Street figures warn about Trump's tariffs”

- **USA Today (4/7/2025)**
  “Jamie Dimon, Larry Fink and Bill Ackman warn of economic outlook with Trump's tariffs”

- **Forbes (4/8/2025)**
  “Forbes Recession Tracker: Clinton’s Treasury Chief Expects 2 Million More Unemployed Americans In ‘Likely’ Downturn”

- **ABC News (3/31/2025)**
  “Trump's tariffs could cause a recession, experts say. Here's how.”

- **Axios (4/3/2025)**
  “A third global recession in 20 years looms”

- **The Economist (4/6/2025)**
  “Trump’s trade war threatens a global recession”

- **MSN (4/8/2025)**
  "BlackRock CEO resets recession forecast for 2025"

- **CNBC (4/8/2025)**
  "Trump tariffs 'will increase the unemployment rate to recessionary levels,' says economist"

So here we are. Another wild day of equity markets wildness and geopolitical tensions. The so-called "relief rally" in the U.S. equity markets showed no sign of relief as the Dow fell more than 300 points, the S&P 500 closed down 1.57 percent and the Nasdaq slumped 2.15 percent.

TREND FORECAST: *Considering the reality of what in the world is going on, we had forecast that gold prices would continue hitting new highs. That has not happened. After hitting a high of $3,157 per ounce last week, as we go to press, spot gold is selling at $2,983 per ounce.*

While the prices have come down, as we say, nothing goes straight up or down and there are corrections. Therefore, considering the socioeconomic and geopolitical realities—which we thoroughly detail in this and previous ***Trends Journals****, we maintain our forecast for rising gold prices as more investors seek safe-haven assets during these "un-safe" times.*

We also maintain our trend forecast for Dot-com Bust 2.0 which will bring down the equity markets and drive gold prices higher.

LAST WEEK: MARKET PANIC WIPES OUT $6.6 TRILLION IN STOCK VALUES

In the 48 hours after 2 April when Donald Trump announced his tariff assault on global trade, the three major U.S. stock indexes erased a collective $6.6 trillion of value.

Since 17 January when Trump was inaugurated, American stock markets have lost $11.1 trillion in value, Dow Jones Market Data reported. The Standard & Poor's index has slid 17.4 percent from its high point in February and entered a correction, defined as dropping more than 10 percent from the most recent high.

All goods coming into the U.S. will now be charged a 10-percent tariff. More than 60 other countries have incurred custom levies in addition, ranging from 3 to 50 percent.

Adding all recent tariff increases together, some Chinese goods now carry a tariff of more than 60 percent.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average wiped away more than 3,200 points over the two days, dropping 7.8 percent.

The NASDAQ plummeted 10 percent over Thursday and Friday, falling more than 20 percent off its latest high into a bear market. The S&P cast off 9 percent of its value. The Russell 2000 index of small and mid-cap companies plunged 8.9 percent.

The “Magnificent Seven” group of megatech stocks collectively lost $1.5 trillion, Dow Jones Market Data reported. Apple’s shares lost $250 billion because so much of its manufacturing is done in China, which now wears a tariff as high as 60 percent.

It was not only the markets’ worst week since the height of the COVID panic but also an all-time record for the amount of value lost in 48 hours.

On 4 April, the U.S. dollar lost 1.8 percent against an array of other major currencies, its worst one-day plop in two years.

Investors were expecting worse to come. S&P futures traded down 2 percent in Monday morning’s early hours and the index opened 4 percent lower on 5 April.

The CBOE Volatility Index, known as Wall Street’s “fear gauge,” closed last week at its highest since April 2020 when the COVID War began. “The collapse is a loss of confidence in dollar-denominated assets,” ING economist Francesco Pesoli told the *Financial Times*. “It’s a vote of ‘no confidence’ in 100 days of Trump.”

There are reasons to feel uneasy. China said that on 10 April it will impose a 34-percent tariff on U.S. goods to match the 34-percent levy Trump has added to the 20 percent he already was charging on Chinese imports.

That raises China's average tariffs on U.S. items to 50 percent, analyst Leah Fahy at Capital Economics wrote in a note. The new levies will fall heaviest on American corn, soy, and wheat exports, the *FT* said.

Trump has promised to retaliate against retaliatory tariffs by upping the new rates even more. No negotiations with China have taken place nor have plans for any been announced.

China previously has choked back exports of critical minerals to the West and opened investigations into U.S. trade practices around farm products and other items.

The yield on the treasury's benchmark 10-year dipped below 4 percent for the first time in a year, closing the week down 0.055 percent at 3.992 percent.

U.S. spot gold was one of the go-to havens investors fled to as they ran away from stocks. The price touched a new high of $3,168.89 during the day on 4 April before settling back to $3,032.81 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT for a weekly gain of 5.1 percent.

The price of Brent crude oil for June delivery sank under the assumption that the U.S. tariff war will slow the world's economic activity. It ended the week down 12.3 percent to $65.58 a barrel at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 4 April. West Texas Intermediate crude, the benchmark for U.S. domestic prices, lost 10.2 percent to trade at $61.99.

Bitcoin weathered the week in good condition, up 3.1 percent to $84,143.09 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 4 April.

Outside of the U.S., stocks also took the plunge.

London's FTSE 100 dove 4.95 percent. The Europe-wide Stoxx 600 crashed 8.13 percent. It was the sharpest decline for both since March 2020.

In Japan, the Nikkei 225 closed down 7.3 percent. The KOSPI index South Korea fell 1.91 percent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index lost 3.48 percent. Mainland China's key CSI 300 dropped 1.76 percent and the tech-centric SSE Composite 0.89 percent.

YESTERDAY: JITTERS ON THE STREET EASE AS STOCKS END MIXED

The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 349.26, or 0.91 percent, to 37,965.60 and the S&P 500 closed down 11.83, or 0.23 percent, to 5,062.25. The tech-heavy Nasdaq gained 15.48, or 0.099 percent, to close 15,603.26.

It was a wild day on Wall Street as U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff policy, once again took center stage. The market was watching any news on tariffs and—to illustrate how volatile the market was—an erroneous headline that was posted on social media at about 10:10 a.m. sent stocks rocketing.

The headline read, "HASSETT: TRUMP IS CONSIDERING A 90-DAY PAUSE IN TARIFFS FOR ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT CHINA." (Kevin Hassett is the director of the National Economic Council.)

The S&P 500 was down 4.7 percent in earlier trading and that post sent the benchmark up 3.4 percent. But stocks came back down again when the headline was clarified, and Trump quickly warned China that he will impose a 50 percent tariff on Chinese goods if it does not kill its 34 percent tariff plan on U.S. goods.

The swings in the equity market sent Treasury yields higher. The 10-year Treasury yield was up 0.19 percentage points to 4.18 percent and the yield on the 30-year Treasury increased by 0.21 percentage points—its biggest jump since 18 March 2020. Stocks ended last week by losing nearly $7 trillion in market value.

TREND FORECAST: *Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said Friday that he expects inflation to edge higher and growth in the U.S. to slow as Trump's tariffs take hold and other countries respond with their own punitive tariffs.*

Economists expect the central bank to keep its interest rate unchanged for the next few months. The Associated Press reported that investors on The Street now

anticipate five rate cuts this year. (The federal funds rate is in the range of 4.25 percent to 4.50 percent.)

As we have forecast, should the equity markets tank, President Trump will pressure Fed-Head Jerome Powell to lower interest rates. He did it before and he will do it again. Back in 2018 when Trump was President the Dow had its worst December since the Great Depression. Trump pressured Powell to lower interest rates, which he did in January 2019. And it worked, with stocks having their best January in 30 years.

Elsewhere, London's FTSE shed 352.90, or 4.38 percent, to 7,702.08 and the benchmark STOXX600 lost 22.32, or 4.50 percent, to 474.01. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei lost 2,644.00, or 7.83 percent, to 31,136.58 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 3,021.51, or 13.22 percent, to 19,828.30. China's Shanghai Composite 245.43, 7.34 percent, to 3,096.58 and the Shenzhen Component lost 1,001.23, or 9.66 percent, to 9,364.50.

TRENDPOST: *Wall Street is a true wild card as we saw with the major spike with the erroneous headline. The question now seems to be: how low would Trump allow the stock market go before he jettisons his tariff plan or makes significant changes... or will he live by his tariff word?*

Indeed, he may well do that since he is only in office a few months and he has another three years and 8 months to play President. Therefore, should the markets sink now and come back strong in three years, what happened in 2025 and 2026 will be long forgotten in 2028.

OIL: London-traded Brent crude prices fell by about 2 percent to $64.21 a barrel and U.S. West Texas Intermediate was down $1.29, or about 2.1 percent, to $60.70.

Oil prices do not like Trump's tariff plans as investors fear that a major trade war would sink the global economy into recession. Crude prices were hit with a double whammy last week during Trump's so-called Liberation Day—when he laid out his tariff plan. Besides the levies, OPEC+ announced that it will increase production by 411,000 barrels a day next month.

TRENDPOST: *Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington yesterday and seemed to show more interest in settling disagreements with Iran by diplomatic means instead of war.*

"I think everybody agrees that doing a deal would be preferable to doing the obvious. And the obvious is not something that I want to be involved with, or, frankly, that Israel wants to be involved with, if they can avoid it," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. Netanyahu sat quietly next to the president and The New York Times reported that he was "strangely quiet during a lengthy question-and-answer session with reporters."

War with Iran would send oil prices soaring above $120 per barrel and that will crash the global economy and the equity markets.

But again, by his deeds, Trump says one thing and does another. Therefore, what happens with Iran no one knows. And he may be selling the line of peace negotiations with Iran while preparing to bomb them.

GOLD: The precious metal fell $55.60, or 1.83 percent, an ounce to $2,981.20.

TREND FORECAST: *Robert Frost wrote, "Nothing Gold Can Stay," a poem about change—so he could have been talking about recent gold prices. As of writing this, at 10:20 p.m. PT, the precious metal has fallen 4.51 percent in the last week—shedding $142.80.*

Trump's tariffs have spooked investors and there has been some recent profit-taking after recently hitting a record high.

Gerald Celente has said, "Nothing goes up forever, there are ups and downs," and that's the truth with every investment.

We maintain our trend forecast that gold will regain its solid footing given the weakening U.S. dollar and global turmoil—which will continue to push investors to the safe haven.

BITCOIN: The world's most popular crypto was down about 5 percent to $78,062 as of 4 p.m. ET, which was a low not reached since 9 November—as crypto investors watched swings in the stock market over Trump's tariff plan.

Cointelegraph reported that investors see BTC's price support zone at $69,000 amid the recent market turmoil.

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal** is still bullish (long term) on BTC, but that's not to say an extended trade war and recession would not slow some of its growth momentum. And, what has changed the bitcoin game is that gold, which is solid and real, is now outshining the digital coin of no solid substance.*

TODAY: TRUMP'S TARIFFS TAKE CENTER STAGE AGAIN AS STOCKS TUMBLE

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed down 320.01, or 0.84 percent, today to 37,645.59 and the benchmark S&P 500 shed 79.48, or 1.57 percent, to 4,982.77. The tech-heavy Nasdaq also closed down 335.35, or 2.15 percent, to 15,267.91 in what was a rollercoaster day on Wall Street.

The market opened the day higher on rumors that U.S. President Donald Trump would be open to negotiating with trading partners about his tariffs, but inconsistency and a looming trade war between the U.S. and China sent stocks lower after the administration announced that the noon ET deadline for China to jettison its 34 percent retaliatory tariff passed. The White House said imports from China will now face a 104 percent combined tariff beginning at midnight.

Beijing announced retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods in response to Trump's tariffs, which it called "blackmail."

China said it will not back down and "will fight to the end if the U.S. side is bent on going down the wrong path."

Elsewhere, London's FTSE gained 208.45, or 2.71 percent, to 7,910.53 and the European benchmark STOXX600 was up 12.90, or 2.72 percent, to 486.91. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei gained 1.876.00, or 6.03 percent, to 33,012.58 and Hong Kong's Hang

Seng was up 299.38, or 1.51 percent, to 20,127.68. China's Shanghai Composite gained 48.97, or 1.58 percent, to 3,145.55 and the Shenzhen Component finished the day up 60.18, or 0.64 percent, to 9,424.68.

TRENDPOST: *The stock market does not like inconsistency and where this tariff game ends is anybody's guess.*

Lin Jian, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said, "We will not let anyone take away the Chinese people's legitimate right to development. We will not tolerate any attempt to harm China's sovereignty, security and development interests. We will continue to take resolute and strong measures to safeguard our legitimate rights and interests."

OIL: London-traded Brent closed the day down $1.39 a barrel, or 2.16 percent, to settle at $62.82 and U.S. West Texas Intermediate shed $1.12, or 1.85 percent, to end the session at $59.58 a barrel.

Oil prices continue their decline amid fears that the world's two largest economies, the U.S. and China, will end up in a trade war that could spark a global recession.

TRENDPOST: *Tariffs and the threat of a global recession has suffocated oil prices but a major war with Iran could turn the market upside down.*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted a video today about his conversation with Trump at the White House. He said the U.S. and Israel agree that "Iran must not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons."

"This can be achieved through an agreement—but only if it is a Libya-style agreement; one where the facilities are entered, dismantled, and destroyed under American supervision and execution—that's good."

Iran has insisted that it wants to solve the issue diplomatically, and that its nuclear program will not be weaponized. But it said it will not be bullied by the U.S. or Israel.

GOLD: The precious metal was up 60 cents an ounce, or 0.02 percent, to $2,982.80 as of 4:04 p.m. ET.

Gold prices benefited from the renewed trade tensions between Washington and Beijing and the weakened U.S. dollar. **The Trends Journal** has long noted that gold shines brighter for foreign investors when they can buy it for a discount when the value of a dollar takes a hit.

TREND FORECAST: *Considering the volatility of the stock market, and global risks of uncontained conflicts, gold will continue to be treasured by investors as a valuable safe-haven asset. Please see this issue's ECONOMIC UPDATE for our gold trend forecasts.*

BITCOIN: The world's most popular crypto could not avoid the reach of the market downturn and was down $2,777.07, or 3.50 percent, to $76,419.67 as of 3:54 p.m. ET.

Crypto investors are worried that the Trump tariff plan will bring on a recession that will bring down economies and the price of BTC, which hit its peak on 20 January 2025—riding the momentum of Trump's election win—when it hit $109,350. The currency fell to below $75,000 during trading for the first time since 6 November 2024.

TRENDPOST: *Hodlers have taken to social media to insist that they are going to ride out these economic bumps. One posted: "Everybody sells bitcoin at the price they deserve."*

The Trends Journal *is still bullish on BTC as a long-term gamble, but that does not mean there will not be unforeseen gyrations along the way. Again, with all of the socioeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty, gold, a solid in-your-hands safe-haven asset, will outshine digital currencies.*

U.S. ECONOMY ADDS MORE LOW PAYING JOBS IN MARCH

Last month, U.S. employers took on 228,000 more workers, surpassing February's 151,000 and beating the 135,000 that economists had forecast in a Reuters poll.

The number was also well above the average of 158,000 jobs added over the last 12 months. However, the labor department revised January and February totals downward.

Hiring in the service sector bounced back from its winter weakness. Healthcare, which pays low wages, once again led the job gains, adding 54,000 workers. The federal workforce shrank by 4,000 after dropping 11,000 employees in February.

March's result will "help ease concerns that the U.S. economy was already slowing before the full burst of Trump's tariffs was announced," the *Financial Times* said.

Hiring proved more resilient than analysts had believed in light of Donald Trump's ongoing mass layoff of federal workers, *The Wall Street Journal* said.

The unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2 percent from 4.1 in the week ending 22 March.

Long-term unemployment—the number of people jobless for 26 weeks or more—also rose, reaching the highest since November 2021.

The rise in longer-term unemployment "provides further evidence that businesses are slowing hiring sharply amid heightened economic policy uncertainty," Samuel Tombs, chief U.S. economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, wrote in a note.

“The risk ahead is that this gradual upward trend in unemployment gathers momentum, as the pace of layoffs also begins to increase,” he added.

The new jobs report includes only a few thousand federal workers. Donald Trump has targeted 280,000 to be fired but many of those terminations are being challenged in court. Whether those people have yet to actually become unemployed will not be settled for some time.

Average hourly earnings rose 3.8 percent last month, outpacing inflation but still the smallest gain since July 2024 and lagging February’s 4-percent bump.

Donald Trump hailed the jobs report, posting “IT’S ALREADY WORKING. HANG TOUGH, WE CAN’T LOSE!!!” on a social media platform.

Households have a different view. In the newest University of Michigan survey of consumer sentiment, two-thirds of respondents expect joblessness to rise over the next 12 months. Shoppers increased their spending a scant 0.1 percent in February, below the rate of inflation but an improvement over January’s decrease.

The jobs report, released 4 April, was buried under news of Trump’s tariff barrage and the markets’ resulting crash.

“Given the market turmoil we’re facing, [the report] is going to be largely overlooked because this is now ancient history,” James Knightly, chief global economist at ING, told the *FT*.

Jerome Powell, chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, echoed the comment in a 4 April speech at a financial conference.

“It is now becoming clear that the tariff increases [are] significantly larger than expected,” he said. “The same is likely to be true of the economic effects, which will include higher inflation and slower growth,” both of which are likely to cut hiring and increase layoffs.

It is “too soon to say what will be the appropriate path for monetary policy,” he added. However, “there are elevated risks of both higher unemployment and higher inflation. While tariffs are highly likely to generate at least a temporary rise in inflation, it is also possible that the effects could be more persistent.”

On 7 April, interest-rate speculators were wagering a 54-percent chance the Fed will cut its rates five times this year to retrieve the economy from a tariff-induced downhill slide. Michael Ceroli, JPMorgan’s chief economist, now expects the bank to cut its rate by a quarter point at every meeting from June through next January.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have long noted, while the mainstream media promotes the job numbers as being significant, when you look at the data, they are mostly low paying jobs for the plantation workers of Slavelandia. See:*

- *“U.S. ECONOMY GROWS 199,000 NEW JOBS IN NOVEMBER” (12 Dec 2023)*
- *“U.S. ECONOMY SPROUTS 303,000 (LOUSY) JOBS IN MARCH” (9 Apr 2024)*
- *“U.S. ECONOMY TACKS ON ANOTHER 272,000 JOBS IN MAY” (11 Jun 2024)*
- *“206,000 WORKERS ADDED IN JUNE FOR LOUSY JOBS” (16 Jul 2024)*
- *“JOB GROWTH SLOWS SHARPLY, TANKING STOCK MARKETS” (6 Aug 2024)*
- *“ECONOMY SPROUTED 254,000 NEW JOBS IN SEPTEMBER, BUT NOT GOOD AS IT SEEMS” (8 Oct 2024)*
- *“ONLY 12,000 NEW U.S. JOBS IN OCTOBER” (5 Nov 2024)*
- *“U.S. ECONOMY ADDS 227,000 JOBS IN NOVEMBER” (10 Dec 2024)*
- *“U.S. JOBS IN DECEMBER UP, TYPES OF JOBS LOW” (14 Jan 2025)*
- *“U.S. ECONOMY ADDS 151,000 JOBS IN FEBRUARY: UNEMPLOYMENT TICKS UP” (11 March 2025)*

SERVICE SECTOR ACTIVITY IN MARCH SLOWEST IN NINE MONTHS

In March, business activity in the U.S. services sector was its slowest since June 2024, according to the Institute for Supply Management's Purchasing Managers Index.

The index dropped to a reading of 50.8, barely above the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction. February's reading was 53.5.

The services sector makes up a much larger share of the U.S. economy than manufacturing.

Construction, government services, and retail and wholesale trade expanded last month. In contrast, educational services, healthcare, and information services contracted.

"Economic growth likely stalled in the first quarter amid uncertainty caused by [Trump's forthcoming] import tariffs," the *WSJ* said.

TREND FORECAST: *Although Donald Trump's tariffs will not affect services as directly as manufacturing, the effect still will have an impact: as prices rise and the economy weakens, consumers will stop consuming restaurant meals, stop traveling for pleasure, cancel their yoga classes, and stop having professionals groom their dogs.*

What will also bring down consumer sales sharply is a sharp stock market decline. When Wall Street crashes Main Street, which is already feeling the economic pain, it will wake up to the reality of how bad it really is. The fish rots from the head down.

WALL STREET BARONS LOSE HOPES FOR TRUMP'S PROMISED "GOLDEN AGE"

Private equity firms are deferring, if not giving up, the new golden age of major dealmaking and swelling profits they expected when Donald Trump campaigned on promises of lower taxes and a softer regulatory touch.

Investors seem to feel the same despair. Share values among the sector's key players were chopped last week.

Apollo Global Management was down by 13.5 percent at one point. KKR was off by 12 percent and Blackstone by almost 10 percent. Private credit specialists Ares Capital Management and Blue Owl Capital also suffered.

Ares' and KKR's stock has dropped about 30 percent since their peak during last fall's political season.

Trump's tariff war "is a huge step back," Robert Koenigsberger, founder of Gramercy Funds Management, told the *Financial Times*. "It materially increases the risk of a recession and the risk of stagflation," especially for emerging nations.

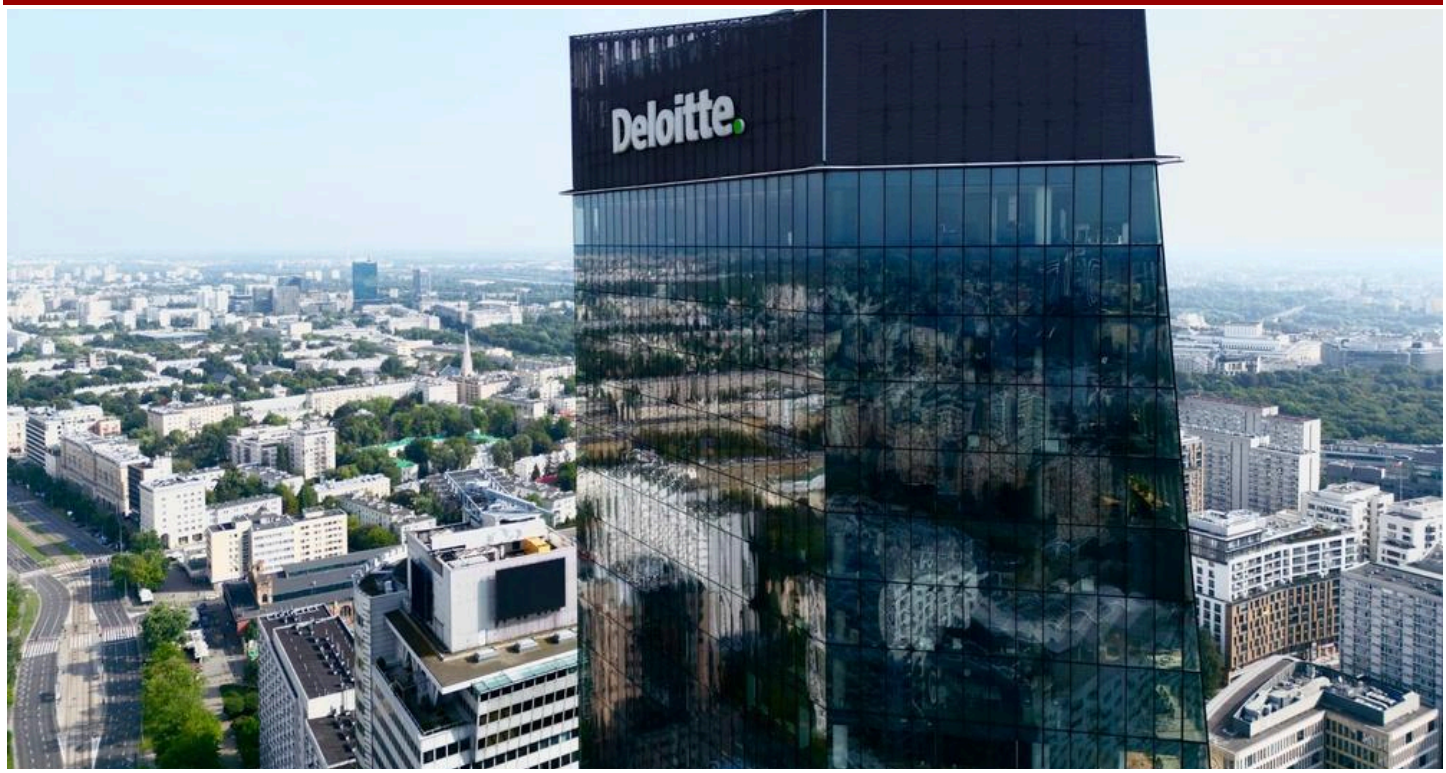
Bill Ackman, founder of the Pershing Square hedge fund, once declared the Trump administration would be the most pro-business and pro-growth administration in history. Now, after recording gains of more than 10 percent in the first six weeks of this year, his portfolio is under water.

Bank stocks also have been whacked. Goldman Sachs' market value lost 9 percent and JPMorgan Chase's was off by 7 percent because investors see shrinking fees ahead for financial houses that underwrite mergers and acquisitions.

Also, investors expect inflation to rise, always a negative for banks' financial performance. The sector's KBW index was down 8 percent over the two days, its worst short-term outcome since the onset of the COVID War in March 2020.

TREND FORECAST: *As the famous George Carlin said, "It's one big club, and you ain't in it." Need proof? Three companies, State Street, Black Rock and Vanguard own 88 percent of the S&P 500. We forecast that the mega-rich will do all they can to jack up the sinking equity markets. Indeed, one percent own 54 percent of the stock markets and the 10 percent control 92 percent. And when they regain much of their losses they will then sell out and the markets will resume their slump.*

TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT



WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS JOBS GO WITH IT

The U.S. added 228,000 jobs in March, while the unemployment rate rose from 4.1 percent to 4.2 percent, according to the Labor Department's job report for March. The number of unemployed workers rose to 7.083 million.

Federal job cuts continue under Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency. The Internal Revenue could lay off up to 20,000 people.

As President Donald's Trump's tariffs take effect, the automotive industry announced significant job cuts. Stellantis plans 900 furloughs at five plants in the U.S. and will temporarily shut production in Canada and Mexico. GM continues with its layoffs in Fairfax, Kans. With 686 jobs on the chopping block.

The job cut trend will increase this year as we have detailed in this and previous **Trends Journals**. This is week 126 that we have been reporting on the latest round of job cuts.

Government job cuts:

- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services – 30 public health workers
- Georgia Department of Health – 180 layoffs of Covid-Specific Contact Tracers
- IRS – up to 20,000 layoffs possible
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health – 873 layoffs

Bank/Financial Layoffs:

- Deloitte – layoffs in U.S, consulting division due to the federal government requesting lower costs of government projects
- Fannie Mae – 700 layoffs this month
- South State Bank – 141 layoffs

Layoffs:

- AlaTrade Foods Alabama – 165 layoffs
- Ariston USA – 73 layoffs
- ASM Global – 160 layoffs
- Automattic (San Francisco, Calif.) – 281 layoffs
- Blue Cross of Idaho – 135 layoffs
- Canva – 10 layoffs
- Carisma Therapeutics – 42 layoffs as the company plans to wind down operations
- Chevron – 600 layoffs at San Ramon, Calif. facility
- Eascan Automation – 20 layoffs
- FedEx (Lebanon,Tenn.) – 217 layoffs
- Fisher Price (East Aurora, N.Y.) – up to 15 layoffs
- Gilead Sciences – 150 layoffs in San Francisco area
- GM – 686 layoffs at its Fairfax, Kan. assembly plant
- Hudson Bay – 200 corporate roles

- March For Our Lives – 13 layoffs
- Merlin Magic Making – 31 layoffs in Florida
- Metropolitan Police (London) – 1,700 layoffs in the Royal Parks, Dogs Unit, Mounted Branch M07 Taskforce, Cold Case and Flying Squad units
- Mitre Corp. – 442 layoffs
- S&S Activewear – 120 layoffs
- Sail Biomedicines – 12 layoffs
- Southeast Service Corporation (Knoxville, Tenn.) – 296 layoffs
- Spark Therapeutics – 337 layoffs
- Stellantis – 900 furloughs at five plants in the U.S. and temporarily shutting production in Canada and Mexico
- Tract (London) – Number of layoffs not provided
- US Cellular – 4,100 layoffs; some workers offered jobs with new company
- Wabash (Lafayette, La.) – 85 layoffs
- Whirlpool Amana – 650 layoffs
- Why Hive (Melbourne, Australia) – Number of layoffs not provided

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS TRENDS

The economic landscape has presented an array of challenges that will profoundly affect the business community this year.

The retail and restaurant sectors continue to be hit with closures as consumers cut back on discretionary spending and don't eat out as often. Walmart announced it will close several stores this year to focus on expanding its gas station business. Guess clothing plans to close 20 underperforming stores in the U.S. this year. Dairy Queen will close 25 locations in Texas.

Manufacturing continues to be hit with plant and factory closures. Graphic Packaging International will close its plant in Middletown, Ohio. Canadian furniture company

Prepac closed its plant in Delta, British Columbia and relocated operations to North Carolina.

Bankruptcies:

- Century West Disaster Restoration
- CTN Holdings
- Loke Marine Minerals (Norway)
- Northvolt – Canceled bankruptcy filing in U.S, and filed in Sweden instead, 3,000 layoffs possible
- Sunterra Farms (Canada)
- The Dolphin Company

Closures:

- 02 Fitness (Raleigh, N.C.)
- 2nd & Charles – closing Colorado store
- 937 Salon and Spa (Kettering, Ohio)
- A&A Auto Parts announced – closing nine of its 10 retail locations in Northeast Pennsylvania
- Ancho Honey (St. George, Maine)
- Anchor Medical Associates – Will close all locations in Rhode Island by June 30
- Aurelio's – Closing South Loop location in Chicago, Ill.
- Blanca restaurant (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Boot City (Lubbock, Texas)
- Cavort Libations & Bites (Davenport, Iowa)
- Charlotte Collective (Charlotte, N.C.)
- Chuy’s Restaurant (El Paso, Texas)
- CSG Systems – Will close its Crawfordville facility
- Dairy Queen – To close in 25 locations in Texas
- Delightful Maple Cafe (Southington, Ohio)
- Dohn Community High School (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- Downtown Market (Allentown, Pa.)
- Duke’s Seafood (Seattle, Wash.)
- EON Clinics (Waukesha County, Wis.)

- Equity Transportation Company, 100 layoffs
- Graphic Packaging International – Will close its manufacturing facility in Middletown, Ohio
- Grede LLC – Shutting down operations in Alabama, 220 layoffs
- Guess clothing – Plans to close 20 underperforming stores across the U.S. this year
- Heritage Valley Kennedy Hospital in (Kennedy Township, Pa.)
- Jack Cooper auto hauling company
- Jameson Loves Danger (Chicago, Ill.)
- Klips and Giggles (Fleming Island, Fla.)
- Lamoraga restaurant (Naples, Fla.)
- LazyBones Smokehouse (Roseville, Mich.)
- Linen World (Oxon Hill, Md.)
- LTI Trucking Services, 250 layoffs
- Marlow and Sons (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Mental Health America (Augusta, Ga.)
- Michaels (Shirley, NY)
- Nativity of Our Lord Church (Scranton, Pa.)
- Neighbor Rotisserie (Bend, Ore.)
- O'Toole's Restaurant and Pub (Colonie, N.Y.)
- Octopus Coffee (Grand Junction, Colo.)
- Papa Cristo's (Los Angeles)
- Pencil Factory (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Pep Boys (Seattle, Wash.)
- Planned Parenthood – closing three Michigan clinics
- Pregis foam packing facility (Tupelo, Miss.)
- Prepac Canadian furniture company – Closed its manufacturing plant in Delta, British Columbia and moved production to its factory in North Carolina
- Pretium Packaging LLC – Closing in North Jacksonville, Fla., 48 layoffs
- Progressive Furniture (North Carolina) – Closing at the end of the year, 30 layoffs
- Ritual Coffee Roasters (San Francisco, Calif.)
- Ruth's Chris Steak House (Boca Raton, Fla.)
- The Bread Pedaler (Lancaster, Pa,).
- The Carrs grocery store (Anchorage, Alaska)
- The Hardcover Restaurant (Danvers, Mass.)

- Tops Friendly Markets (Dewitt, N.Y.)
- Walmart – Plans store closures to grow its network of gas stations.

OPEC+ WILL BOOST OUTPUT IN MAY AS OIL PRICES TANK

Meeting on 4 April, two days after Donald Trump announced his tariff war, ministers from eight member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies (OPEC+) agreed to increase oil production by 411,000 barrels a day beginning next month.

The ministers cited “healthy market fundamentals” and a “positive market outlook” as reasons contributing to their decision.

The unexpected move sent oil prices lower after they already had dropped in the face of broad U.S. tariffs likely to slow the world’s economy and industrial output.

Futures contracts for Brent crude, the world’s pricing standard, plunged below $70 last week and ended 4 April below $66. Brent for June delivery was trading at $64.35 at 5 p.m. U.S EDT on 7 March.

The boost to production is part of the group’s larger plan to repeal 2.2 million daily barrels’ worth of cuts that were implemented in 2023 as oil prices sagged. The eight countries—Algeria, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—voluntarily scaled back their production then to boost revenue.

The eight are scheduled to meet again on 5 June to plan future production levels. They emphasized that outputs could be cut back again depending on market conditions.

TREND FORECAST: *As we have often said, OPEC+ will try to fine-tune oil's price to ensure the countries maximize their profit and cash flow.*

Like everyone else, OPEC ministers are focused on the tariff war. If and when the Trump administration reaches trade accommodations with large oil users such as China, OPEC+ will adjust its price cautiously upward.

However, should the Tariff War escalate into a global trade war, economies will sharply decline as will demand for oil. Thus, OPEC+ latest tactic to pump more oil will keep oil prices low. Therefore Brent crude has a long way to go before it recovers back to $80 in the foreseeable future.

CAR MARKET UPSET: BYD SETS SALES RECORD, TESLA SLUMPS

BYD, China's premiere maker of hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs), saw its sales rocket up 58 percent in this year's first quarter, the company said. Sales of pure EVs rose 39 percent.

Domestic demand and expanding overseas markets pushed annual revenue past $100 billion for the first time.

In contrast, European buyers are giving Tesla the cold shoulder. Sales volume fell by about 10 percent despite a March upgrade to the popular Model Y.

In France, registrations in March of new Teslas dropped 38 percent year on year. In Sweden, the plunge was 64 percent.

BYD's share price has gained about 45 percent this year; Tesla's has shrunk by 36 percent.

Some analysts attribute the drop to Musk inserting himself aggressively into European partisan politics; others say consumers are tired of the same old models and are being lured by the growing number of available EVs at prices competitive with Tesla.

“Beyond the numbers, our sense is that there is some level of brand damage happening in western Europe and pockets within the U.S. or Canada caused by Elon Musk’s political activities, in turn hurting demand,” analyst Edison Yu at Deutsche Bank wrote in a note.

Tesla’s corporate office has warned that Donald Trump’s trade war will raise the sticker price of the company’s cars and will cost it sales.

TREND FORECAST: *While Tesla was the first electric car to make a global splash, it has lost the innovation race to Chinese competitors.*

Those competitors also have been financially supported by the Chinese government, which has poured money into research, development, factory construction, and worker training.

With its research, development, and manufacturing base firmly in place, China’s EV makers will continue to enter new markets (Latin America currently) where they will dominate for the foreseeable future.

SPECIAL REPORT: TRUMP'S TARIFFS, THE UPS AND DOWNS, FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *We saw this coming! Back on 2 January of this year we had forecast that Playing The Wild Card would be a Top Trend for 2025... and here we are. And who dealt the Wild Card? It was another one of our Top Trends for 2025... The Trump Card.*

At this point it is a guessing game on what country will do what in response to President Trump's tariff threats and what deal he will make with other countries. And that is precisely how the equity markets see it. After a nearly $7 trillion wipe-out last week, on Monday stocks suddenly spiked after it was reported that the top White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said Mr. Trump might hold back on his latest tariff plan for 90 days. But that was later called "fake news" by the administration.

But the "fake news" was not all bad news. While The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 349 points, the S&P 500 fell only 0.2 percent while the Nasdaq rose 0.1 percent.

And now, in response to President Trump's statement that he would impose an additional 50 percent duty on China imports starting Wednesday—if Beijing does not drop its 34 percent tariff it put on U.S. imports to China last week—the trade war is ramping up.

According to a CNBC translation of a statement issued by China this morning, "The U.S. threat to escalate tariffs on China is a mistake on top of a mistake," and that "China will never accept it. If the U.S. insists on its own way, China will fight to the end."

And today CNBC reported:

> *The U.S. tariff rate on Chinese imports will shoot up to 104 percent at 12:01 a.m. ET on Wednesday, a White House official confirmed to CNBC.*
>
> *Trump on Monday had threatened to raise existing tariffs on China by 50 percent on Wednesday unless Beijing dropped its retaliatory duties on U.S. goods by Tuesday.*
>
> *That same day, Trump said he specified that China faced a deadline of "12 o'clock" to remove its tariffs.*
>
> *Beijing vowed that it would not scrap its 34% retaliatory tariffs.*

So here we are. The tariff fight has just begun. Again, it keeps changing by the day and as we have said, where it goes nobody knows.

This is the latest overview of the Tariff War:

TRUMP "LIBERATES" U.S. WITH WORLDWIDE TRADE WAR

U.S. president Donald Trump has announced a 10-percent tariff on all goods entering the country and has custom-tailored higher rates on about 60 countries Trump sees as putting "unfair" tariffs, taxes, or regulatory restrictions on U.S. imports.

The blanket 10-percent rate took effect on 5 April. The separate rates for individual countries will be imposed as of 9 April.

Trump headlined 2 April, the day of his announcement, as "Liberation Day" for the U.S., the day the U.S. would free its economy from unfair trade barriers because the U.S. would pound those countries with reciprocal obstacles. "It's our declaration of economic independence," he said.

“Our country and its taxpayers have been ripped off for more than 50 years but it’s not going to happen anymore,” he added. “For years, hard-working American citizens were forced to sit on the sidelines as other nations got rich and powerful, much of it at our expense, but now it’s our turn to prosper.”

Trump has said the tariffs will revive the U.S. manufacturing industry, create jobs and businesses, energize economic growth, and pour as much as $600 billion a year in additional revenue into the U.S. treasury.

The extra money can pay for Republicans’ new round of tax cuts, trade representative Peter Navarro and other Trump advisors have said.

The tariffs will create such a boon that they will more than offset any temporary economic damage or “pain” they will create, administration officials claim.

Administration officials believe the shock to the global economy is necessary to correct deeply entrenched problems, such as high tariffs, but also including regulatory entanglements, intellectual property theft, and health and labor standards.

“Today we’re in one era and tomorrow we will be in a different era,” one official said to the *Financial Times* on 2 April.

Trump’s move shreds the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that nations signed following World War Two. The treaty’s objective was to lower trade barriers to spur economic recovery after the war and also to integrate the global economy in order to create an interdependence that would reduce risks of another war.

Trump believes other nations have gamed the system to take unfair advantage against the U.S.

Trump’s new tariffs also tear up the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the trade treaty Trump negotiated during his first term to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he did not like either.

Japan was handed a 24-percent tariff and European countries 20 percent.

China was slapped with a 34-percent levy on top of the 20 percent Trump has imposed already. Piling the various tariffs on China together, the average load on goods coming in from China will reach 76 percent, according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

As of 3 April, all cars shipped into the U.S. from elsewhere will carry a 25-percent tariff. That will raise the retail price of affected cars by anywhere from $2,000 to $20,000, according to a study by Michigan consulting firm Anderson Economic Group.

Vietnam, which has emerged as a major manufacturing hub in recent years, was tagged with a 46-percent U.S. tariff.

Canada and Mexico were exempted from the new tariffs but are left with the 25 percent rate Trump imposed on them earlier this year.

Trump's upending of world trade caused a panic on Wall Street, where the three major U.S. stock indexes vaporized $6.6 trillion in the 48 hours following his announcement.

Companies with supply chains rooted in Asia took a drubbing. Nike's share price fell 6 percent, Apple's 5 percent, and Amazon's 4 percent. Big-box stores including Best Buy, Target, and Walmart all were hit hard, as was Amazon.

China has been ratcheting up its own tariffs on U.S. goods since 10 February when it laid import duties on American farm equipment and oil, liquefied natural gas, and petroleum products. In March, it socked an assortment of U.S. farm products with additional fees.

The European Union is responding with two sets of retaliatory tariffs. The first round includes fees of as much as 50 percent on a range of U.S. items, including motorboats, motorcycles, and whiskey. The tariffs are scheduled to take effect 15 April to allow time for negotiations between Europe and the U.S. to continue.

Europe also could invoke a relatively new tool called the “anti-coercion instrument,” which would enable the European Union to put trade taxes on U.S. services as well as goods.

The damage from Trump’s tariff war will be global, not regional, observers have warned.

“If you impose tariffs on one country, like China, at least you have other markets available to you,” Richard Fontaine, president of the nonprofit Center for a New American Security, said to the *Financial Times.* “If you impose them on everyone, then you only have your own market to rely on.”

“Countries that have tried that have usually ended up giving themselves lower economic growth, lower employment, higher prices, and less quality,” he added. Trump’s tariff war “combines an economic policy that is not productive with a foreign policy that is not productive.”

U.S. Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has called Trump’s trade war “absurd, crazy, chaotic.” *The Wall Street Journal* has labeled it “the dumbest trade war in history.”

On its cover, *The Economist*, a British weekly that leans conservative, showed a sketch of Trump sawing the U.S. off from the rest of the world under the title “Ruination Day.”

WORLD ECONOMY IN TURMOIL AS TARIFFS TAKE HOLD

“My advice to every country right now is, do not retaliate, sit back, take it in, and let’s see how it goes,” treasury secretary Scott Bessent, told Fox News. “If you retaliate, there will be escalation. If you don’t retaliate, this will be the high water mark.”

Too late for that.

The reactions of other nations to the new U.S. tariff regime ranged from outrage to dismay.

The French president called on European countries to cease all investment in the U.S. or its companies. “What would the message be of having major European actors investing billions of euros in the American economy at a time when they are hitting us?” he said in a public statement, adding “nothing is excluded” in terms of retaliation.

China will “resolutely take countermeasures to protect its own rights and interests,” the country’s commerce ministry said in a statement. “It is clear that more and more countries have come to stand against the U.S.’s tariff hikes and other unilateral bullying moves.”

China has said it will impose a 34-percent tariff on incoming U.S. goods to match the 34-percent that Trump has now assigned to Chinese imports.

In contrast, U.K. prime minister Keir Starmer said he would redouble efforts to reach a trade deal with the U.S. after negotiations to avoid the 10-percent blanket levy failed.

Developing nations face the greatest threat from Donald Trump’s draconian tariff regimen. Some are heavily dependent on their sales to the U.S. to maintain their precarious economies.

The New York Times compiled a list of countries and the share of their GDPs that depends on shipping goods into the U.S.

A sampling:

COUNTRY	**EXPORTS TO U.S. AS PERCENT OF GDP**	**NEW TARIFF (AS PERCENT)**
Vietnam	29	46
Cambodia	27	49

Nicaragua	24	19
Guyana	23	38
Thailand	12	37
Malaysia	12	24
Sri Lanka	4	44

Sri Lanka's apparel makers "will have to write our obituary notice," a Sri Lankan consultant to the industry told the *NYT*. "Forty-four percent is no joke."

Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam have transformed themselves into low-cost manufacturing centers to give the U.S. an alternative to China. A large share of the auto parts, electronics, footwear, furniture, and handbags come from those countries. Now the cost of their goods will jump and sales will likely fall.

"Even the countries that are not facing high tariffs are going to be in trouble," Jayati Ghosh, an economist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, said to the *NYT*.

Because supply chains will be thrown into turmoil and massive uncertainty will leave businesses unable to plan, "you will get much lower investment, lower economic activity, and lower employment," she added.

TREND FORECAST: *Emerging nations already are struggling under heavy overburdens of COVID-era debt, as we have documented in "Emerging Nations Buckling Under Debt Load, World Bank Warns" (19 Dec 2023) and other articles.*

Many have shorted their budgets for education and healthcare for their populations in order to service their debt.

The new tariffs are likely to reduce the export sales on which these countries depend, especially during a time when the global economy is wobbling.

As a result, more poor nations will join Ghana, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka in defaulting on their national debt payments, adding an additional drag on financial systems and institutions in the developed world.

TRADE WAR LIKELY TO THROW U.S. INTO RECESSION, ECONOMISTS WARN

The U.S. economy, already bogging down before Donald Trump's assault on global trade, now faces higher prices for everything the country imports, risking inflation's return. Business investment will shrink, income from exports is likely to contract, and unemployment could well increase, a range of analysts are warning.

Even before the new tariffs were imposed, the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had forecasted a slump in U.S. GDP this year. The Federal Bank of Atlanta's GDP-Now gauge of real-time economic activity was pointing to a 1.4-percent contraction in this year's first quarter.

The tariffs, if they remain as announced, will add about $1,350 a year to the typical household's cost of living, according to James Knightly, ING's chief U.S. economist. Others have pegged the added cost as high as $3,800.

In Trump's first-term trade war, more than half of his 20-percent tariff on washing machines was passed through to consumers, the *Financial Times* reported.

After Trump announced his new tariff campaign, the risk of a U.S. recession rose from 40 percent to 60 percent, according to JPMorgan economists. Barclays analysts see a fourth-quarter contraction for the American economy.

"If there is no retreat [from the tariffs], markets will price a U.S. recession," UBS economist Paul Donovan wrote in a note. "If there is a retreat, markets will assume U.S. growth will weaken." Retaliation by key trading partners such as China and the Eurozone will gnaw at markets and the economy even more.

The average tariff on imported goods is now 22 percent, the highest since 1910, compared with 2.5 percent before 2 April, Fitch Ratings has calculated.

Trump inherited a strong economy that Wall Street expected to grow even more with lower taxes and reduced regulation. Instead, his chaotic approach to policy and whimsical changes of mind have led businesses to delay investment, the *FT* said.

Trump has set no measurable goals or benchmarks regarding what the tariffs are intended to accomplish, so uncertainty remains around how long the tariffs will last. Much depends on the success of dozens of trade concessions or negotiations with individual affected countries.

“Tariffs will negatively affect the economy by…raising import prices, reducing corporate profits and investment, driving up economic uncertainty, tightening financial conditions, and forcing other countries to retaliate against American exports,” Matt Gertkin, in charge of geopolitical strategy at BCA research, wrote in a note.

The trade war also complicates the U.S. Federal Reserve’s calculations around interest rates.

The central bank had suggested it could make two cuts this year to its key interest rates. If prices rise, it would be pressed to freeze rates to ward off inflation; if the economy slows at the same time, the Fed would feel a pull to cut rates to revive growth.

On 7 April, interest-rate speculators were wagering a 54-percent chance the Fed will cut its rates five times this year to retrieve the economy from a tariff-induced downhill slide. Michael Ceroli, JPMorgan’s chief economist, now expects the bank to cut its rate by a quarter point at every meeting from June through next January.

Trump administration officials estimate the tariffs will pour $600 billion into the U.S. treasury. A key unanswered question is how that money would be used.

If the funds are used to offset the budget deficit or pay down the national debt, “the U.S. would be lucky to avoid a recession,” Neil Shearing, Capital Economics’ chief economist, said in an *FT* interview. “If it’s given back to consumers via tax cuts, then economic growth might not suffer too badly.”

The Republican-backed tax plan working its way through the U.S. Congress gives 60 to 90 percent of the reductions to the wealthiest Americans, analysts have said.

EUROPE GRAPPLES WITH TARIFF IMPACTS

The European Union (EU) is bracing for impacts and sorting through its options in dealing with a new 20-percent tariff rate on everything it ships to the U.S.

Germany's economy has teetered on the brink of recession for the past two years. With Trump's new tariffs, the country "could expect a recession for this year" Joachim Nagel, president of the Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, said in a BBC interview.

The tariffs could be "the last nail in the coffin" of Germany's auto industry, *The Guardian* newspaper wrote. The nation's auto and machine tool sectors are in crisis because cheaper Chinese competition has taken much of their markets.

Netherlands-based automaker Stellantis immediately announced it is cutting production at its plants in Canada and Mexico and laying off 900 U.S. workers.

The EU's trade office is negotiating with Trump officials and has offered to buy more U.S. goods. "We're preparing for further countermeasures to protect our interests and businesses if negotiations fail," EU president Ursula von der Leyen said in a televised address.

At the same time, Europe is expecting to defend itself against a flood of cheap Chinese imports.

The U.S.'s new tariffs as high as 60 percent on Chinese goods will deflect sales of those electronics and other products toward other markets—and the prime one is Europe.

In response, Europe is stepping up scrutiny of inflows of foreign goods and preparing defensive tariffs of its own.

"The immediate trade shock to Asia will probably reverberate back to Europe [due to] a formidable tariff wall in the U.S.," Robin Winkler, Deutsche Bank's chief economist for Germany, said to the *Financial Times*. French president Emmanuel Macron warned of possible "massive consequences" for the region's industries.

“We will have to take more safeguard measures for more of our industries,” an unnamed senior EU official told the *FT*. “I don’t expect they [China] are going to change their model of exporting overcapacity.” Any resulting new tariffs could be “much higher” than the 35 percent the EU now levies on imported Chinese electric cars, the official warned.

Because U.S. tariffs on China are “far greater than many, including us, had expected,” the chances that China will engage in “goods-dumping in Europe” has risen “materially,” Nomura economist Andrzej Szczepaniak wrote in a note.

While the EU continues to dicker with the U.S. over the new tariffs, many European leaders are calling for a sharper, more immediate response.

France’s Macron has called for European businesses to cease all investment in the U.S. and its companies.

The new trade tax “is comparable to the war of aggression against Ukraine,” Robert Habeck, Germany’s departing vice-chancellor, told a press briefing. “The magnitude and determination of the response must be commensurate.”

“The EU is the largest single market in the world,” outgoing German chancellor Olaf Scholz said in a public statement. “We therefore have every opportunity to react in a united and decisive manner and to show that we have our own instruments for action—and they will be used.”

“FACTORY ASIA” FACES SEVERE DAMAGE IN TARIFF WAR, ANALYSTS SAY

Donald Trump has put tariffs as high as 60 percent on Chinese imports. However, his flurry of tariffs “will land hardest on Asian manufacturing” in other countries, the *Financial Times* wrote.

After Trump pasted a range of stiff import duties on Chinese goods in 2018, many Western companies moved their factories to small Asian nations where labor was cheaper and political relations were less fraught.

As a result, the region has busily reconfigured itself as a manufacturing center to give the world's consumers a cheaper, less politically charged alternative to China. Cambodia exports low-cost clothing to the U.S. Thailand sends auto parts, farm products, gems, rice, and tires. Vietnam supplies significant shares of the footwear and furniture sold in the U.S.

The country also is the U.S.'s second largest source of imported clothing after China.

New American tariffs ranging from 32 to 49 percent will "hit 'Factory Asia' hard," Citi analysts wrote, throwing many countries off a rising trajectory of employment and prosperity that has begun to steadily increase only recently.

"The impact [will] be worse for Vietnam, given U.S. exports account for 30 percent of its GDP," Bernstein analysts wrote in a note. Trump tagged the country with a 46-percent tariff.

They think Vietnam's economy would shrink by 6 percent under the extra financial load.

Electronics, which accounted for 30 percent of Vietnam's U.S. exports last year, will be hurt worst, analysts have said.

Japan has shipped hundreds of thousands of its new Switch 2 game consoles to the U.S. from Vietnamese factories. Forty-five percent of Samsung's smartphones, the second most popular brand in the U.S., arrive from Vietnam.

Samsung probably will shift its production to India, according to TrendForce, an Asian research service.

“This wave of tariff measures will help India accelerate the development of its smartphone supply chain and take on more orders,” TrendForce analyst Mia Huang wrote in a note.

The high tariffs on China and Vietnam give India “a valuable near-term window of export competitiveness,” Pankaj Mohindroo, chair of the India Cellular & Electronics Association, noted in a statement. Keeping that window open depends on the outcome of trade talks now underway between India and the U.S., he said.

During prime minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Washington last month, the two countries pledged to more than double the value of mutual trade to $500 billion a year.

Hundreds of smaller U.S. clothing retailers depend on, and support, Asian manufacturers, Felix Chung, chair of the Hong Kong Apparel Society said, adding he was “shocked” by the new tariffs’ severity.

U.S. customers make up half of some society members’ sales. “How can manufacturers react?” he wondered. “Where else will they go?”

Many Asian factories have received orders for coming seasons and have invested in new production facilities, he pointed out. “Now we are caught off-guard.” Many of those factories’ U.S. customers “may just cancel orders if they can’t afford the new tariffs.”

NEW TARIFFS PROMPT FITCH TO DOWNGRADE CHINA’S BOND RATING

On 3 April, Fitch Ratings downgraded China’s debt rating from A+ to A out of concern for the weak state of government finances as well as the impact of new U.S. tariffs that range from 34 to 60 percent.

China likely will be forced to boost government spending to support the economy, battle ongoing deflationary pressures, and offset the impacts to new U.S. trade levies that will reduce China’s foreign sales, the agency said in a statement announcing the change.

“This support, along with a structural erosion in the revenue base, will likely keep fiscal deficits high,” Fitch wrote, forecasting that the rate of government debt to GDP will “continue its sharp upward trend over the next few years.”

Beijing called the reduced rating “biased.”

“China’s economy has a stable foundation, many advantages, strong resilience, and great potential,” the finance ministry said in a statement. There has been no change to “long-term favorable conditions” or to “the trend of high-quality economic development.”

Still, the government plans to go deeper into debt to keep supporting a shaky economy.

“China will continue to implement a more proactive fiscal policy and a moderately loose monetary policy,” the ministry added.

In April 2024, Fitch downgraded China’s credit outlook from stable to negative, citing the government’s growing debt as the country transitioned to a focus on cutting-edge industries.

The outlook is now stable, despite concerns about tariffs, Fitch says, “because of headroom at the current rating to accommodate the likely implications for economic growth and fiscal metrics.”

“China has a very high level of savings that need a home and much of it goes into bonds via banks and pension funds,” China economist Allan von Mehren at Danske Bank pointed out in comments quoted by the *Financial Times.*

“The People’s Bank of China is also set to ease policy further and increase liquidity by reducing reserve requirements, so there will be ample money to buy bonds to fund the debt,” he said.

The whopping tariffs are likely to prod China's leaders to ramp up their policy shifts to milk a greater economic outcome from domestic consumption in place of exports, analysts told the *FT*.

TREND FORECAST: *As the COVID War subsided, China bet its short-term economic future on exporting high tech, such as electric cars and solar panels. That plan is under pressure as the U.S. and Europe raised trade barriers to protect their own industries.*

Again, totally forgotten is the fact that Beijing destroyed the nation's economy when it launched the COVID War on its Chinese Lunar New Year, "The Year of the Rat" in 2020 and imposed three years of draconian zero-COVID policy that destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of its citizens. Thus, it will be difficult for the government to take meaningful measures to jolt its domestic economy back to life.

The three-plus-year-old crisis in the housing market continues. Home values have crashed and homeowners are saving, rather than spending, to make up for their lost equity.

China will increase its efforts, and its spending, to bring the consumer economy back to life. Even if those measures succeed, they will take time to persuade a skeptical population of consumers while foreign sales continue to slow.

Therefore, China's fiscal prospects will become more strained for the foreseeable future and could easily incur another downgrade to the country's credit rating. But, as we have detailed, as the world becomes more tariff ridden nations will become more self-sufficient and self-sustaining. And China, with 1.4 billion people will be buying more Made-in-China products rather than importing them from other countries. See the many article links in "SPOTLIGHT: CHINA'S SHIFTING ECONOMIC POLICIES" (17 Dec 2024), and also:

- *"SPOTLIGHT: CHINA'S ECONOMIC PLAN" (7 Jan 2025)*
- *"SPECIAL REPORT: CHINA'S TECH SURGE" (18 Feb 2025)*
- *"SPECIAL REPORT: CHINA'S AI SURGE" (4 Mar 2025)*
- *"IMF UPGRADES CHINA'S 2025 GROWTH FORECAST" (11 Mar 2025)*

NEW TARIFFS DRIVE DOWN PRICES FOR OIL AND METALS

Futures contracts for Brent crude oil, the benchmark for world oil prices, fell below $66 a barrel in the days after Donald Trump announced his tariff campaign on 2 April.

Investors and economists expect the stiff new trade taxes will slow economic growth and cut demand for diesel, gasoline, natural gas, and other fossil fuels.

The prices of industrial and precious metals, including copper, gold, and silver also tumbled.

Trump exempted fossil fuels and critical minerals from his new tariffs in an effort to keep prices low for American consumers and industries. However, the shotgun impact of his tariffs overcame the selective carveout, with investors believing the resulting industrial crash will pare back the need for those materials.

Trump's tariffs were particularly aggressive against some of the countries that use the most energy, particularly China, Japan, and Germany and other countries of the European Union.

The value of an exchange-traded fund of oil and gas companies fell 10 percent on Thursday, more than twice the Standard & Poor's index loss on the same day, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. ExxonMobil's share price gave back 5 percent and Chevron's more than 6 percent.

Crude prices slid further on 4 April after OPEC+ members announced they will boost production beginning next month. (See "OPEC+ WILL BOOST OUTPUT IN MAY AS OIL PRICES TANK" in this issue.)

Brent closed at $64.21 per barrel at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 7 April.

TRENDPOST: *Countries will take advantage of these low fuel prices to restock their strategic fuel reserves and U.S. companies will shop for supplies of key metals by looking to sources carrying the lowest tariffs.*

COUNTRIES TRY TO ESCAPE TARIFFS BY APPEASING TRUMP WITH CONCESSIONS

In announcing his worldwide tariff program, Trump gave nations an out by saying he would reconsider trade taxes on countries taking “significant steps” to remedy what he sees as their unfair treatment of U.S. goods.

In trade talks that began last month, the European Union (EU), which had a $235.6-billion trade surplus with the U.S. in 2024, has offered to cut its 10-percent duty on cars to match the U.S.’s 2.5 percent. It also offered to buy more U.S. oil, weapons, and liquefied natural gas and join the U.S. in taking action against China’s product dumping.

The talks resumed on 4 April, EU officials said. The cratering U.S. stock market and threat of a recession gives them leverage, one unnamed member of the group told the *Financial Times*.

South Korea has long been a target of Trump’s criticism and booked a record $55-billion trade surplus with the U.S. last year. It had made no concessions before tariffs were announced.

The country could buy more American-made weaponry and liquefied natural gas, but it also has negotiating leverage of its own: in some key industries, such as computer chips and shipbuilding, it offers one of the few alternatives to Chinese suppliers.

“There are certain strategic industries where the U.S. will not be able to afford to isolate itself from global supply chain partnerships,” analyst Tom Ramage at the Korea Economic Institute of America told the *FT*.

South Africa has come into Trump’s gunsights because of its affirmative action laws. Trump assigned it a 31-percent tariff. In 2024, it sold the U.S. about $4 billion in critical minerals, such as the platinum used to make catalytic converters in cars.

The stiff trade tax “affirm[s] the urgency to negotiate a new bilateral and mutually beneficial trade agreement,” president Cyril Ramaphosa said in a public statement.

Some countries are learning that what they consider “significant steps” are not significant enough.

On 1 April, the day before Trump’s announcement, Israel ended all import duties on U.S. products. No matter—it was handed a 17-percent tariff.

Japan had agreed to boost its imports of U.S. liquefied natural gas and take part in a planned Alaska pipeline. It also hinted that boosting its defense spending would pay off for American military contractors.

The result: Japan was stuck with a 24-percent import duty.

In March, Vietnam, facing a 46-percent import duty, offered to cut its tariffs on U.S. items and buy more American farm products, more liquefied natural gas, and planes from Boeing. It also allowed Elon Musk’s SpaceX to test its StarLink satellite service there.

It did no good. The punishing 46-percent tariff came anyway.

India had preemptively eased tariffs on U.S. bourbon, luxury cars, motorcycles, solar cells, and other items. When Indian prime minister Narendra Modi visited Washington in March, he and Trump said the two countries would begin negotiating a trade deal.

On 2 April, India was slapped with a blanket 27-percent tariff.

TREND FORECAST: *The U.S. trade representative’s office now faces the task of conducting individual trade negotiations with dozens of countries. That will delay resolutions that would trim back tariffs for many U.S. trade partners.*

Consequently, some nations—particularly smaller ones heavily dependent on sales to the U.S.—will try to jump-start settlements by offering concessions that will have to receive a thumbs up or down from Donald Trump.

As we have seen, Trump's future direction is unpredictable.

That will leave dozens of nations no choice but try to seek out other markets for their goods. China and India in particular will be prime candidates.

U.S. BOND YIELDS SINK UNDER WEIGHT OF TARIFFS

Donald Trump has called for bond yields to fall and, last week, they complied.

The return on the 10-year treasury note, which benchmarks interest rates for mortgages and other consumer loans, ended last week at 3.992 percent, almost a full point below its January peak of 4.8 percent. The yield was still at 4.2 percent the day before Trump announced his tariff blitz.

Lower bond yields reduce government borrowing costs and also interest rates on consumer loans, Trump administration officials have pointed out.

Yields fall as bond prices rise with demand and many investors fled to bonds as stock prices collapsed after the announcement. The U.S. Federal Reserve is increasingly expected to cut interest rates as the country's economy sags under the weight of the new trade war. If the Fed's rates fall, bond yields will rise, paying higher dividends to their owners.

In recent weeks, investors have shied away from U.S. government bonds, expecting the Fed to hold interest rates where they are in its continued struggle to reduce inflation to its 2-percent target.

Now some investors are betting the tariff war will drive prices higher, likely refueling inflation and moving the Fed to raise its rates and sending bond yields higher.

"I think the Fed won't be early but I think they will be aggressive when they go," Priya Misrah, a portfolio manager at JPMorgan Asset Management, told the *FT*. "In fact, the later they are, the more they have to go."

TREND FORECAST: *We forecast that should the U.S. equity markets continue their downturn, President Trump will pressure the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates. He did it back in 2018 when he was President. Back then the Dow had its worst December since 1931... the Great Depression. Trump pressured Fed-Head Jerome Powell to lower interest rates and he did lower them in January 2019.*

Also, the lower bond yields and interest rates fall, mortgage rates will also decline. When, or if, mortgage rates fall below 6 percent—as of 7 April the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate is 6.826 percent—minus a stock market crash, it will boost the housing market and drive home prices higher.

SPOTLIGHT: BIGS GETTING BIGGER

SMALLER DEALS ABOUND IN BRISK M&A MARKET

Dealmakers are not waiting for Donald Trump's policies of tax cuts and relaxed regulation to come into effect.

The total value of megadeals worth at least $10 billion slipped by 1 percent in this year's first quarter, year on year. However, the value of mergers and purchases below that level jumped 42 percent, marking their best start to a year since 2021, the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) said.

Worldwide, the value of deals at all price levels was up 15 percent and the number of deals was up 36 percent.

Dealmaking outside the U.S. has "been on a spree" compared with a year ago, particularly in Asia and Europe, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. The number of combinations in Europe climbed 12 percent and a whopping 59 percent in Asia.

Bigger deals in the U.S. have been on hold not only while waiting for economic policy to clarify but also because the Trump administration's attitude toward combinations seems less friendly than expected. Vice president J.D. Vance has talked tough about guarding against consolidating corporate power.

The smaller deals are not only easier to finance but also are less likely to draw regulatory scrutiny.

"There's a lot moving around the world but you see less volatility" than in the U.S., Michael O'Brien, an M&A attorney with law firm Morrison Foerster, told the *WSJ*. Also, the dollar's recent strength has made deals elsewhere more attractive, he noted.

The tech industry remained the busiest in the quarter just ended, headlined by Google's $45-billion purchase of cybersecurity firm Wiz. Softbank subsumed chip designer Ampere for $6.5 billion and a private equity consortium paid $4.4 billion for software developer SolarWinds.

Healthcare also was especially active. The price Johnson & Johnson paid for Intra-Cellular Therapies topped $14 billion. Walgreens Boots Alliance went to Sycamore Partners for $10 billion. AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, and Sanofi also have announced that relatively modest purchases of new treatments are in the works.

Recent deals in the U.S. include PepsiCo's takeover of Poppi, a prebiotic soda company, for $1.6 billion. Online real estate brokerage Redfin was taken by Rocket for $1.75 billion. Rocket also bought mortgage firm Mr. Cooper for $9.4 billion.

Here is the latest round of M&A's:

COLONIAL PIPELINE SOLD TO BROOKFIELD FOR $9 BILLION

All assets of Colonial Enterprises, the owner of Colonial Pipeline, the largest U.S. fuel transport network, have been bought by Brookfield Infrastructure Partners for $9 billion.

Brookfield will pay $500 million in cash and finance the balance.

Colonial's 5,500-mile web of pipelines extend from Houston, Tex., to New York City's harbor and moves 100 million gallons of petroleum products every day, the company said in a statement.

At the same time, oil giant Shell is selling its 16.13-percent interest in Colonial to a Brookfield subsidiary separately for $1.45 billion.

BROOKFIELD BUYS LAB EQUIPMENT MAKER FOR $1.4 BILLION

Brookfield Asset Management is paying Chicago private equity firm GTCR $1.4 billion for Antylia Scientific, which manufactures laboratory equipment.

The purchase was made by a $12-billion Brookfield fund focused on healthcare and industrial technologies.

Antylia makes more than 200,000 separate pieces of lab equipment and is among the world's largest providers.

"The deal is the latest sign of an increase in private equity exits" from current investments, the *Financial Times* noted. Many of the firms waited through 2022, 2023, and much of 2024 to sell. They were waiting for interest rates to decline and the global economy to firm up before cashing out.

BROOKFIELD BUYS CONTROL OF MORTGAGE COMPANY

Brookfield Asset Management has signed a deal that will give it 50.1 percent of mortgage lender and investor Angel Oak Companies. Price and terms of the sale were not announced.

Angel Oak, which manages more than $18 billion, has two businesses. Angel Oak Mortgage Solutions originates home mortgages, chiefly for people unable to qualify for home loans from conventional sources. Angel Oak Capital Advisors is an asset management arm that invests in mortgages and other areas.

Angel Oak originated about $30 billion in home mortgages over the past decade. It has bundled much of that portfolio into bonds varying in size and degree of risk.

Angel Oak will remain an independent business. Brookfield's investors will be able to put money into Angel Oak's residential mortgage loan business.

Brookfield is expanding its presence in private credit, a post-COVID growth area for private equity firms. That sector has become Brookfield's chief growth engine, now with about $317 billion in managed assets. The company registered as a broker-dealer in 2024.

"Large investors want to do business with fewer managers who can offer everything, allowing them to be more strategic," Craig Noble, CEO of Brookfield's credit platform, told Bloomberg. "That has been true in the alternative asset management business and it'll be more so for private credit firms."

Rocket Mortgage is following a similar strategy. This year it has bought online brokerage Redfin for $1.75 billion and mortgage originator Mr. Cooper for $9. billion. (See "Rocket Mortgage Buys Competitor for $9.4 Billion," 1 Apr 2025).

Rocket's goal is to provide clients with a single company to handle real estate transactions end to end, from finding a home to securing a mortgage to servicing the loan, CEO Varun Krishna has said.

GUATEMALAN CONGLOMERATE BUYS HARVEST HILL'S BEVERAGE FAMILY

Castillo Hermanos, a 139-year-old Guatemalan food conglomerate operating throughout Central America, is buying Harvest Hill Beverage Co., which makes SunnyD orange drink (formerly Sunny Delight), Fruit2O, Veryfine, and seven other sweetened drink brands.

The sale values Harvest Hill at about $1.5 billion.

The purchase enables Castill to reach budget shoppers in the U.S. who are turning away from pricier brands as their budgets shrink. At a Brooklyn supermarket visited by *The Wall Street Journal,* a gallon of Tropicana fruit drink was priced at $7 a gallon while SunnyD was selling for $3.79.

Those price conscious shoppers boosted SunnyD's U.S. grocery store sales by almost 7 percent in the year ended 16 March.

“A lot of people grew up with [Sunny D],” Roberto Lara, Castillo’s CEO, told *The Wall Street Journal*. “There is a loyal base, but we have to ensure we listen to those consumers and potential new consumers, as to what they are looking for.”

In the U.S., the brand is a favorite among Hispanic consumers, a demographic growing in size and purchasing power, Lara noted.

SunnyD has been spurned by many Americans now more conscious of healthier foods.

While Tropicana uses 100-percent juice in its drinks, SunnyD’s main drink contains just 5 percent juice.

It also uses corn syrup and artificial sweeteners as well as synthetic dyes, the kinds of ingredients that newly minted U.S. health secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. has declared war on.

SunnyD may evolve to use fewer dyes and no high-fructose corn syrup, as the brand’s Spanish version now does, Lara said. “I think there are things we should look at,” he added.

Harvest Hill operates six U.S. manufacturing plants. Castillo will use them all, as well as all of the company’s 1,000 employees, it said.

HERSHEY BUYS COMPANY THAT MAKES HEALTHIER SNACKS

The Hershey Co., known for its chocolate, has agreed to buy LesserEvil, a maker of health-oriented snacks, for an undisclosed price.

LesserEvil, valued at about $750 million, makes a self-named popcorn using avocado oil, onion-flavored organic corn rings, and “space balls” that imitate cheese puffs.

Earlier this year, LesserEvil asked investment bankers to find a buyer for it.

Large snack companies are trending to buy smaller companies with healthier offerings as sugar and chemical additives have steered consumers, especially younger ones, away from conventional offerings.

Also, Hershey is diversifying as the price of cocoa is rising as parasites are killing millions of cacao trees in Africa and, now, imported cacao and cocoa will carry higher tariffs.

AD FIRM BUYS CLOUD COLLABORATION SOFTWARE COMPANY

London-based WPP, one of the world's largest advertising firms, is acquiring InfoSum, which creates software that allows businesses to securely connect, analyze, and use data across different sources" without moving the data and while maintaining data security and personal privacy, the company explains.

WPP has bought the software innovator to craft more effective marketing campaigns. The ad agency has gone deep into artificial intelligence (AI) and InfoSum's programs will make better use of that capability, WPP said in a statement.

"Directly integrating InfoSum's global data network and technology infrastructure will enable us to train client AI models against the most data from the most places at unprecedented scale and speed," Brian Lesser said. Lesser is president of Group M, the WPP arm that bought InfoSum.

WPP has partnered with the Heineken brewing company to use AI for marketing. The agency also has invested in Stability AI, which allows it to use AI in audio, images, 3D, and video in its campaigns.

WAR ON CHILDREN: 100 CHILDREN KILLED OR INJURED A DAY SINCE GENOCIDE RESUMES IN GAZA, UN SAYS

The U.S.-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza—that resumed last month—is killing or injuring at least 100 children a day and turning the enclave into a “no land” for “young lives,” Philippe Lazzarini, the head of UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said.

Lazzarini posted on X: “Nothing justifies the killing of children” and the ongoing punishment campaign is a “stain on our common humanity.”

Al Jazeera, citing UNICEF, reported that as of Saturday, at least 322 children have been killed since Israel abandoned the ceasefire agreement with Hamas and implemented a total blockade on the enclave.

Catherine Russell, the head of UNICEF, said the collapse of the ceasefire is tragic for the children of Gaza because the fragile truce provided the enclave with a rare glimpse of “hope for a path to recovery.”

She continued, “But children have again been plugged into a cycle of deadly violence and deprivation.”

Middle East Monitor reported that at least 17,000 children have been killed in Gaza since the Hamas attack in 2023. The report noted that children inside the enclave have also been deprived of an education because the enclave’s school system has been “under direct attack by the Israel occupation, which continues to destroy schools and prevent children from assessing safe, educational environments.”

Hamas accused Israel in a statement obtained by the outlet of intentionally targeting children “through systematic crimes, including using them as human shields, depriving them of education, and attempting to sever their national identity in the occupied territories of 1948 through manipulation of curricula, the spread of crime, and the destruction of values.”

Israel has shown no signs of stopping its brutal genocide in Gaza and killed at least 32 people across Gaza on Sunday—mainly women and children.

TRENDPOST: *This is the Euronews Sunday headline:* ***Death toll from Russian attack on Kryvyi Rih rises to 19, one dead after overnight strikes in Kyiv.***

Not a word about Israel’s daily massacre of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank nor the death toll and identifying the number of women and children who were killed by the IDF.

For the mainstream Western media they ignore the reality that the bombing of entire buildings across Gaza and the West Bank result in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent civilians. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics says 43 percent of Gaza’s 2.1 million are under the age of 18. About 39,000 children in Gaza have lost at least one parent in the genocide.

The Middle East Monitor reported Saturday that at least 50,600 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed since October 2023 and 9,500—including 350 children—are currently being held inside Israeli prisons where they face "torture, starvation, medical neglect, and systematic deprivation on a daily basis."

Israel has detained about 1,200 Palestinian children in the West Bank since the Hamas attack, according to the report. If they were Israelis they would be called "hostages." But as Palestinians they are prisoners... and again, this atrocity is ignored by the Western media.

More than 142,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the days following the ceasefire's collapse. (See "HAARETZ BLAMES ISRAEL FOR 'DERAILING' GAZA CEASEFIRE—NOT HAMAS" 25 Mar 2025, "NETANYAHU SABOTAGED CEASEFIRE DEAL" 10 Sep 2024, "NETANYAHU: BIDEN BULLSHITTING, SAYS CEASEFIRE DEAL NOT CLOSE" 10 Sep 2024, "NETANYAHU'S NEW DEMANDS FOR CEASEFIRE RULES OUT DEAL, REPORT SAYS" 13 Aug 2024 and "SMOTRICH WARNS NETANYAHU NOT TO AGREE TO GAZA CEASEFIRE" 13 Aug 2024.)

Netanyahu blamed Hamas for refusing to release the remaining Israeli hostages and said after Israel's first night of new bombings: "I promised you many times… if Hamas persists in its refusal and does not release our hostages, we will return to fighting. And indeed, we have returned to fighting—we have returned to fighting with intensity."

He said the strikes were just the beginning.

Russell, the head of UNICEF, called Israel's bombardment in Gaza on 18 March the deadliest night yet for children who remain in the enclave.

"Some of the strikes reportedly hit makeshift shelters with sleeping children and families, another deadly reminder that nowhere is safe in Gaza," she said.

And as we have reported in detail, Israel, not Hamas, has violated the ceasefire agreement and even the Israeli news organization, Haaretz, confirms that reality. See: 19 March 2025 Haaretz Editorial: ***Israel, Not Hamas, Is Derailing the Gaza Cease-fire and Preventing the Hostages' Return.***

SETTLER RAMPAGE ON WEST BANK VILLAGE NOT TERRORISM, KATZ SAYS

Knesset member for Likud, Israel Katz who is serving as Minister of Defense, said last week that he would not classify the brutal assault by masked Israeli invaders (that are whitewashed as "settlers" by the mainstream media) in Duma, the Palestinian village in the West Bank, was not an act of terrorism.

About 30 masked "settlers" from Mateh Binyamin Regional Council—an outpost in the West Bank, ran wild in the village on Tuesday evening, torching homes and cars in the village.

Palestinians who confronted the attackers were beaten and assaulted according to reports.

The IDF said in a statement that it was alerted that "dozens of Israeli civilians" were setting fire to property in the area of the village of Duma. The IDF said the incident led to violent clashes between the Israelis and Palestinians.

"The IDF condemns such incidents and will continue to act resolutely to maintain security and order in the area," the statement read.

All Israel News reported that the IDF and Border Police were called to the scene and fired live rounds and tear gas at the Palestinians—not the Israeli invaders who committed the crimes against humanity.

Katz said there was "lawbreaking" during the incident—that resulted in three Palestinians being hospitalized—and it must be "dealt with."

“We must enforce [the law] against whoever did this. I am against violence, I support enforcing the law,” he told Israel’s Army Radio, according to *The Times of Israel.*

He continued, “I don’t define this as terror. This is my perspective.”

TREND FORECAST: *In today’s world, facts don’t matter, bullshit is what counts. If Palestinians committed the crimes against Jewish people that Israeli’s commit against Palestinians—which Israel has been committing for decades—it would be labeled by the mainstream media as “Holocaust 2.0”.*

But by Katz’s statements and actions he can say and do what he wants and makes it clear that Israelis can ignore their justice system but enforce it on the Palestinians.

It was Katz, who on 22 November 2024, ended the use of administrative detentions for Israeli settlers in the West Bank. When distilled, administrative detention in Israel allows the IDF or police to detain suspects without any charges. B’Tselem, the Israeli human rights center, said the detention stems from the 1945 Defense (Emergency) Regulations, which is essentially military law from the British Mandate era.

“Over the years, Israel used these regulations extensively in the Occupied Territories to punish and deter. The Regulations served as the authority for Israel to demolish and seal hundreds of houses, deport residents, administratively detain thousands of persons, and impose closures and curfews on towns and villages,” B’Tselem reported.

In January, Katz announced that settlers who had been held under administrative detention were allowed to be released after the “ceasefire” was announced with Hamas—that Israel eventually broke. Katz justified the move by stating that Israel was about to release “terrorists from Judea and Samaria”—the biblical name for the West Bank.

He said the move was intended to send a “clear message of strengthening and encouraging the settlements, which are at the forefront of the struggle against Palestinian, terrorism and face growing security challenges. It is better for the families of Jewish settlers to be happy than the families of released terrorists,” according to The Times of Israel.

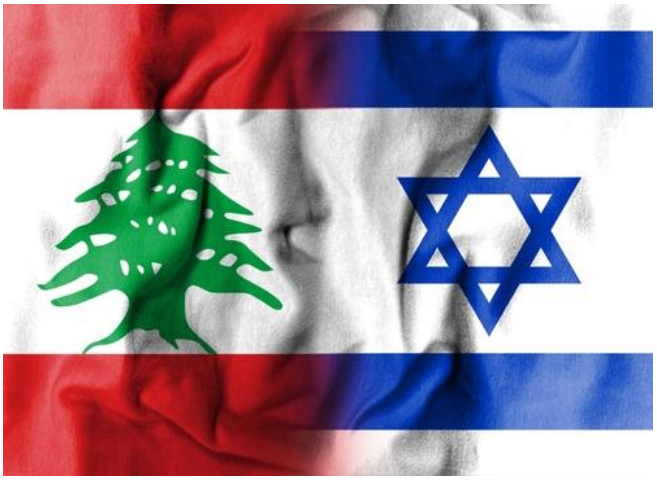
Katz said the attack in Duma did not rise to the level of an administrative detention—which he called "draconian."

Yair Golan, the leader of the Democrats party, called the rampage in Duma a "pogrom," The Times of Israel reported.

***The Trends Journal** has reported extensively on how the Israelis are working to turn the West Bank into Gaza 2.0. (See "ISRAELI PAPER CONDEMNS SETTLER-SOLDIER RAIDS IN WEST BANK'S JINBA AS LATEST EXAMPLE OF TREACHERY" 1 Apr 2025, "ISRAELI SETTLERS ATTACK WEST BANK TOWN IN LATEST ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE RESIDENTS" 18 Mar 2025, "TRUMP ENDS BIDEN SANCTIONS ON VIOLENT WEST BANK ISRAELI SETTLERS AS THEY RAMP UP MORE WAR" 21 Jan 2025, "TOP UN REPORTER: ISRAELI SETTLERS MUST BE STOPPED AND IT'S UP TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO STEP IN" 23 Jul 2024, "ISRAEL'S SMOTRICH: WE WILL KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND TO MAKE A 'GREATER ISRAEL'" 29 Oct 2024 and "SMOTRICH SAYS NETANYAHU AGREES TO KEEP STEALING PALESTINIAN LAND" 25 Jun 2024.)*

OCHA, the UN humanitarian agency, said there have been at least 1,580 attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers last year that resulted in casualties or damage to property, Reuters reported. There have been 220 attacks since the start of the year, according to data in March.

ISRAEL RAMPS UP WAR AGAINST SYRIA



Israel intensified its military strikes and intrusion in Syria last week, drawing criticism from Syria's fragile government that has said it wants a peaceful coexistence with its neighbor.

The IDF carried out strikes on what it identified as military installations across Syria on Wednesday, which included targets in Damascus—which is seen as an escalatory measure.

Haaretz said the bombings targeted a military airport in Homs, in western Syria, and an airbase in Hama, also in the country's west. The report said the Israelis took out what was left of any military infrastructure in Damascus.

Israel Katz, the Israeli defense head, told his forces on Thursday that the recent bombing campaign should send a "clear message and a warning about the future—we will not allow harm to the security of the state of Israel," according to *The New York Times.*

He continued, "If you will allow hostile forces to Israel to enter Syria and endanger Israeli security interests, you will pay an extremely high price."

The Trends Journal has reported extensively on how Israel has been quick to pounce after the fall of Syria's Bashar al-Assad. The country, which is tribal and fractured even in the best of times, is now seen as a territory that will become a power struggle between Turkey, Israel, and the newly formed Syrian government. (See "ISRAEL MASSACRES 6 IN SYRIA, IDF STEALS MORE LAND" 1 Apr 2025, "IDF HEAD SAYS ISRAEL READY TO STAY IN SYRIA FOR AN 'UNLIMITED' AMOUNT OF TIME" 18 Mar 2025, "ISRAEL STEALING MORE LAND IN SYRIA, FEAR GRIPS SOUTHERN TOWNS" 11 Mar 2025, "IDF TROOPS ADVANCE DEEPER IN SYRIA…ALL IN THE NAME OF

SECURITY!" 7 Jan 2025 and "U.S. CONCERNED ABOUT TURKISH TROOP BUILDUP IN NORTHERN SYRIA AS ISRAEL TAKES OUT CARVING KNIFE" 17 Dec 2024.)

The *Times* noted that Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes on Syria since Assad's ouster. The IDF said the ground incursion and bombings are required to ensure Israel's safety amid such upheaval.

Syria's new leadership has said several times that it wants a peaceful relationship with Israel and has called on the IDF to stop the attacks. There is growing fear that the IDF plans to occupy large swaths of southern Syria—all in the name of security.

Israel has gotten bolder in its attacks and have fired deeper into Damascus and killed at least nine during raids in Daraa, a town in southern Syria, as the IDF moves deeper into the country. The Israelis said the attack in Daraa was an effort to destroy "terrorist infrastructure" and said the shooting occurred after its forces came under attack by "militants."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the fall of Damascus could not have happened without the IDF's thrashing of Hezbollah and Iran, as his forces took positions in a once-demilitarized part of the Golan Heights, which has been illegally occupied by Israel since 1967.

The demilitarized zone now occupied by Israeli troops came about in 1974, during an armistice deal. Netanyahu said the agreement "collapsed" now that Syrian troops are no longer there. He insisted that the troops at the new location will be only temporary to ensure that no "hostile force embeds itself right next to the border of Israel," according to the *Financial Times.*

The Israelis have been clear that there is no time limit for these troop deployments. The *Times*, citing "visual analysis," reported that it seems that the IDF is "prepared to remain indefinitely."

The military is erecting watchtowers, building new roads, walls, and prefabricated homes.

Netanyahu, who said the 1974 ceasefire with Syria collapsed with the Assad regime, has vowed not allow any military infrastructure to be positioned south a Damascus, which could lead to new tensions between Tel Aviv and Ankara because Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa has talked to Turkey about the establishment of a Turkish airbase in the central part of the country.

Israeli troops have overrun southern Syrian towns and, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, are conducting themselves in a similar manner as in the occupied West Bank. Haaretz cited a report that said part of the agreement could be that Turkey could defend Syria in the event of future attacks.

TRENDPOST: *Anyone who defends their homeland from an Israeli invasion is considered in the Western media as "militants" and it seems every IDF battalion is "elite." This is the propaganda game to keep reminding the public that the Israelis are the "good guys" and their adversaries are the terrorists.*

One resident from Tall al-Jabiye said the individuals who were killed in the confrontation were civilians who felt compelled to "defend the town." They were identified as construction workers, a tailor, and shopkeeper.

The BBC reported that there is a feeling of disappointment among some Syrians who once believed the Israelis were only attacking the country because of Assad.

"We used to believe that the Israeli army was only targeting Assad's regime forces," Ismail, a restaurant owner in the west of the country, told the outlet. "But its continued, incomprehensible bombings are sadly making us think that Israel is an enemy of the Syrian people."

TREND FORECAST: *The Genocide State of Israel can, bomb, kill and slaughter whoever they want, anywhere they want, and if you condemn their atrocities you are condemned as an "Anti-Semite." As we have detailed, Israel has been bombing Syria for decades killing whoever they want, anywhere they want. Here are a few of their bombing runs over the past few years. See:*

- *"ISRAEL BOMBS SYRIA" (19 Jan 2021)*

- *"ISRAEL ACCUSED OF BOMBING SYRIA" (23 Mar 2021)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA" (Nov 2021)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA" (11 Jan 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS LAUNCHING MISSILES INTO SYRIA. WILL WAR ESCALATE?" (22 Feb 2022)*
- *"ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES KILL 3 SOLDIERS IN SYRIA" (1 Mar 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL BOMBS DAMASCUS, KILLING 9 AS CLANDESTINE WAR CONTINUES" (3 May 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL LAUNCHES, KEEPS ATTACKING SYRIA, 3 DEAD" (24 May 2022)*
- *"UNPROVOKED, ISRAEL BOMBS GAZA KILLING 43, WOUNDING HUNDREDS" (9 Aug 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL: BOMBS AWAY OVER SYRIA, BUT LOOK THE OTHER WAY BECAUSE IT'S NOT UKRAINE" (13 Sep 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIAN AIRPORTS, KILLS MORE TROOPS" (20 Sep 2022)*
- *"ISRAEL: MORE BOMBS AWAY OVER SYRIA" (15 Nov 2022)*
- *"BOMBS AWAY OVER SYRIA: ISRAEL CONTINUES ITS WAR WITH SYRIA" (22 Nov 2022)*
- *"TOP TREND 2023, MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: ISRAEL BOMBS DAMASCUS'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT" (10 Jan 2023)*
- *"MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: SYRIA SAYS ISRAEL LAUNCHED ATTACK ON ALEPPO AIRPORT" (7 Mar 2023)*
- *"ISRAEL BLAMED FOR ANOTHER ATTACK ON SYRIAN AIRPORT" (28 Mar 2023)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA" (18 Apr 2023)*
- *"MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: ISRAELI AIR RAIDS TARGETS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN SYRIA" (2 May 2023)*
- *"THE ISRAELI WAY: BOMBS AWAY FOR ANY REASON THEY MAKE UP" (11 Jul 2023)*
- *"RUSSIA CALLS ISRAELI STRIKES ON SYRIA A 'GROSS VIOLATION' OF INTERNATIONAL LAW" (17 Oct 2023)*
- *"ISRAEL RAMPS UP WAR. KEEPS BOMBING SYRIA" (24 Oct 2023)*
- *"ISRAEL KEEPS EXPANDING WAR, KNOCKS OUT DAMASCUS AIRPORT IN SYRIA" (28 Nov 2023)*

- *“ISRAEL KILLS IRANIAN MILITARY ADVISER IN SYRIAN STRIKE, BUT THAT’S OK BECAUSE LIKE AMERICA, THEY CAN KILL WHO THEY WANT ANYWHERE THEY WANT” (6 Feb 2024)*
- *“ISRAEL ACCUSED OF KILLING ANOTHER IRANIAN OFFICER IN SYRIA” (5 Mar 2024)*
- *“ISRAELIS ‘BADLY MISCALCULATED’ STRIKE ON IRANIAN CONSULATE IN SYRIA” (23 Apr 2024)*
- *“AS FORECAST ISRAEL EXPANDING WAR, BOMBS AWAY OVER SYRIA AND LEBANON” (4 Jun 2024)*

NO OUTRAGE: IDF BOMBS UN CLINIC IN NORTHERN GAZA, KILLING 22, INCLUDING 9 CHILDREN

Nothing is off limits in Gaza and the IDF on Wednesday attacked a UN clinic in Jabalia, a refugee camp in the northern reaches of the enclave, killing at least 22—including nine children who had been huddled inside the building amid the latest onslaught.

UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, issued a statement that said the strike hit two rooms on the first floor of the building where 160 families had been sheltering.

“Many displaced families have not left the site, simply because they have absolutely nowhere else to go,” the statement read.

One of the victims was identified as a 1-week-old who was decapitated. (GRAPHIC WARNING: Video emerged on Drop Site that purported to show a distraught Gazan man holding the baby.)

The IDF said it targeted Hamas militants who were inside the building and using it as a "command and control center." Israel, citing an "intelligence review, said it killed four Hamas operatives in the strike*, The Times of Israel* reported.

Ramy Abdu, the Euro-Med human rights monitor chairman, said it was predictable that the Israelis would claim that Hamas fighters were inside the building.

"I challenge the army to name the alleged target," he said, according to Truth Out*.* "In a few hours, they'll pick up the name of a young man and falsely label him as Hamas. Wake up, world—Israel is committing a full-scale genocide."

Gaza's Government Media Office called the attack the IDF's latest assault on shelters for displaced people, according to Drop Site News. The government said at least 228 schools, tent encampments, and other civilian shelters have been bombed, "with no evidence provided of military activity."

The Wednesday attack was just one of many across Gaza that resulted in at least 77 dead Palestinians.

Israel Katz, the Israeli defense minister, said Wednesday that the IDF will extend its reach in Gaza and take over "large areas" of the enclave.

Katz said the IDF will clear new areas of "terrorists and infrastructure and capture extensive territory that will be added to the State of Israel's security areas," according to *The Times of Israel.*

TRENDPOST: *The Gaza Ministry of Health reported on Saturday that the IDF killed 1,309 people in Gaza since 18 March—when the ceasefire collapsed after Israel tried to alert the ceasefire agreement that would extend Phase 1 of the deal instead of discussing Phase 2, which would have allowed the IDF to keep its troops inside the enclave and get back more hostages.*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu never had any intention of exiting Gaza after the Hamas attack on 7 October and the Israeli leader said the IDF has now "switched gears."

"The IDF is seizing territory, striking the terrorists and destroying the infrastructure," he said, according to CNN. "We are now dividing the strip and increasing the pressure step by step, so that they will give us our hostages. And as long as they do not give them to us, the pressure will increase until they do. We are also doing something else: We are seizing the Morag Corridor. This will be the second Philadelphi, an additional Philadelphi Corridor." (See "STARVE THEM TO DEATH! AID ORGANIZATIONS SAY ISRAEL REJECTS ATTEMPTS TO DELIVER ESSENTIAL GOODS INTO GAZA" 1 Apr 2025, "AFTER ISRAEL VIOLATES CEASEFIRE DEAL, IDF BLOCKS ENTRY OF ALL HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA" 4 Mar 2025, "NO BIG DEAL: ISRAEL CARRIES OUT AIRSTRIKE IN NORTHERN GAZA, KILLING AT LEAST 9 HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS" 18 Mar 2025 and "UN: GAZA CHOKED OFF FROM NEEDED HUMANITARIAN AID, 'BLEEDING TO DEATH'" 30 Jan 2024.)

Israel is operating inside Gaza with impunity. Video emerged last week on social media that showed the bodies of Palestinians being blasted over 100 feet in the air after an Israeli bombing—which has become a daily occurrence.

TRUMP IS PREPARING TO BOMB IRAN, REPORT SAYS

The U.S. and Israel are planning to carry out a major strike on Iran that aims to eliminate the country's nuclear program that the White House claims could be used to quickly develop nuclear weapons, Dan Hodges, a journalist for *The Daily Mail*, reported.

"Donald Trump's trade war is a sideshow," he wrote. "A real war is coming."

Trump has said he will not allow the Iranians to develop nuclear weapons and has threatened to unleash the U.S. military if needed. Hodges noted that Trump is not the

first U.S. president to make similar threats, but he said, “There's now clear evidence that, this time, both the U.S. and Israel intend to do more than just rattle their sabers.”

Hodges wrote that he filed the story from Tel Aviv after speaking “to several senior political, military and diplomatic sources.” He said the feeling in Israel is that the government may never have a better opportunity than now to attack Iran with the U.S.’s assistance—with Trump in the White House. (See “FOX NEWS ALUM MORGAN ORTAGUS—THE DEVOUT ZIONIST—SAYS TRUMP GAVE ISRAELIS WHAT THEY NEED TO SMASH GAZA” 25 Mar 2025, “TRUMP APPROVES ANOTHER $4 BILLION IN ARMS SALES TO ISRAEL, INVOKES ‘EMERGENCY AUTHORITIES’” 4 Mar 2025, “TRUMP’S FIRST MONTH PANDERS TO ISRAEL” 18 Feb 2025, “ISRAEL PRAISES TRUMP’S ‘BOLD VISION’ FOR GAZA” 11 Feb 2025 and “TRUMP’S EARLY DECISIONS SEEM TO ‘CONFIRM EXPECTATIONS’ THAT HE WILL LEAD THE MOST PRO-ISRAEL TEAM IN YEARS, REPORT SAYS” 28 Jan 2025.)

He noted how Trump told NBC News that Iran would face a bombing campaign that it has never seen if it rejects demands by the White House to end its nuclear program. An Israeli source said Trump was not being dramatic.

“It's extremely important for the stability of Israel and the world,” the official said.

He wrote that he spoke to a senior diplomatic source who said Israel is aware that it may never have a better chance than now to attack Iran, with Trump in the White House.

“From Israel's perspective, with Trump in the White House, this represents the optimum moment to deal with Iran. There won't be a better chance,” the source said.

Israel believes that it managed to knock out anti-missile systems in Iran and Syria in previous attacks that could allow easier access for fighter jets to reach their targets.

Axios reported last week that the White House is considering indirect discussions with Tehran amid the U.S.’s military buildup in the region. The report said Trump wants to “have a loaded gun at the ready” when he decides Iran has run out of time.

Haaretz noted that the military buildup in the region is the largest since the Hamas attack in October 2023. These assets include B-2 bombers, another aircraft carrier group, F-35s, and anti-missile systems.

TRENDPOST: *Last month, Tulsi Gabbard, the Director of National Intelligence, told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the intelligence community in the U.S. continues to assess that Tehran "is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons program he suspended in 2003."*

She told the committee that Iran's "enriched uranium stockpile is at its highest levels and is unprecedented for a state without nuclear weapons."

Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector, said in a recent interview that the U.S. is prepared to go to war with Iran and has submarines that are capable of launching ballistic missiles already in the region.

"They aren't there for the Houthi," he said. "They're there to launch preemptive, decapitation strikes against Iran using nuclear weapons. We're ready to go to war against Iran. We already made that decision; the planning exists."

If Iran develops a nuclear weapon, "they'll never know what hit them," Ritter said.

Ritter said the American plan will be focused specifically on nuclear sites and civilian casualties will likely be in the tens of thousands—not the tens of millions.

Ritter has called Iran to come to its senses and agree to a new deal.

"Iran doesn't want nuclear weapons. Therefore Iran doesn't need nuclear infrastructure capable of producing nuclear weapons," Ritter said. "Russia has agreed to provide Iran with nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel. The smart move here is for Iran to trade its uranium enrichment capability for the lifting of all sanctions. And for those who say the bomb would protect Iran, remember: Iran doesn't want a nuclear bomb."

Ritter got some backlash for the post from users who said it should be up to Iran to make that decision.

"The only thing that will stop the US and Israel from attacking Iran is a nuclear deterrent. You don't negotiate with terrorist states," one user posted.

Iranian leaders have warned that there are about 50,000 American troops stationed in the region and that it would be vulnerable if a major attack is launched.

Masoud Pezeshkian, the Iranian president, said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran wants dialogue on equal footing" and will not bow to intimidation.

***TREND FORECAST:** As we have long forecast, should the United States and Israel go to war with Iran, it will be the official beginning of WWIII. We have noted that Iran, a country of some 91 million people, is very advanced militarily, scientifically and technologically and they have been preparing for war against the U.S. and Israel for decades.*

On the other hand, Israel is a nation of just 7 million Jewish people and as a result of their continuation of the Gaza war plus their frequent attacks against Syria and Lebanon, their military capabilities are being rapidly depleted... and limited. It should also be noted that the United States has not won a major war since WWII... which they did with their allied relation with the Soviet Union.

Therefore, Iran will destroy Israel should full war break out. And as we have noted, should Israel see it is being defeated, they will launch the Samson Option... which means they will go nuclear.

LONDON POLICE RAID QUAKER BUILDING TO BREAK UP ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTEST GROUP

London's Metropolitan Police last week carried out a massive raid at a Quaker meeting house in the city to break up a gathering of individuals preparing to protest the genocide in Gaza—in the latest move by the government to intimidate and snuff out any criticism of Israel as it butchers Palestinians inside the enclave.

Witnesses said about 20 uniformed police officers, armed with tasers, broke into the building at about 7:15 p.m. and seized cell phones and laptops. They fanned out inside the building and arrested six women. (Five others were arrested days later on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.)

The individuals arrested were identified as supporters of the activist group called Youth Demand.

London tried to justify the raid by accusing the group of planning protests that aimed to shut down the city next month. The BBC reported that Youth Demand, which calls itself a "new youth resistance campaign, fighting for an end to genocide," has engaged in acts of civil disobedience in the past to protest the Gaza genocide.

On Saturday, about 40 members of the group blocked traffic in central London and were issued warnings by police. There were no arrests and the group promised to keep up the protests every Tuesday and Saturday in April, *The Guardian* reported.

The police sweep of the Quaker meeting house raised new alarms in London that the government—which has already cracked down on anti-genocide protesters through its Public Order Act 2023—was following the lead of U.S. President Donald Trump's crackdown on speech.

Paul Parker, the recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, told *The New York Times* that the raid and subsequent arrests was an unheard-of violation by the city's police.

"No one has been arrested in a Quaker meeting house in living memory," he told the paper.

He continued, "This aggressive violation of our place of worship and the forceful removal of young people holding a protest group meeting clearly shows what happens when a society criminal protests."

Parker's Quakers in Britain issued a statement that condemned the raid at the Westminster Meeting House that it called a "direct result of stricter protest laws removing virtually all routes to challenge the status quo."

The statement continued: "Quakers support the right to nonviolent public protest, acting themselves from a deep moral imperative to stand up against injustice and for our planet."

Protest

Quakers in London held a protest in front of New Scotland Yard in response to the police raid**.**

Christian News reported that the demonstration was held in silence, which is the traditional Quaker practice.

Phil Laurie, the head of Quaker Support for Climate Action, who organized the protest, said he wanted to "envelop the Police HQ in love and peace," according to the report.

"In raiding the Quaker Meeting House in Westminster, the Metropolitan Police brought violence to a house of peace," he said. "Our aim is to bring love and peace to replace police violence and demonstrate a different approach to dealing with difficult situations."

Rev. Professor Sandra Eldridge, an associate priest from the Chelmsford Diocese, also told the outlet, “This is the sort of action you might expect in an authoritarian state—not in a long-standing democracy.”

TRENDPOST: *Democracy or—as Gerald Celente likes to call it: Duh-mock-racy?*

Millions have taken to the streets across London since October 2023 only to be confronted by anti-riot police operating under the Public Order Act 2023 that Volker Turk, the UN human rights head, said was “deeply troubling” given that it puts “undue restrictions” on peaceful gatherings, according to The Times.

Human Rights Watch accused London of “seriously undermining” democratic rights after the new administration did not revoke the law in January.

Ella Grace-Taylor, 20, one of the individuals arrested in the police raid, posted a video on social media promising that the movement will not be deterred.

“We will let this fuel us because we know this means that we are winning,” she said.

PROOF: ISRAEL INTENTIONALLY MASSACRES PALESTINIAN EMERGENCY WORKERS

The Israeli military was forced to change its narrative about the events leading up to the murder of 15 Palestinian emergency workers after *The New York Times* published cellphone video of the attack that was taken by one of the paramedics who was killed.

Israel has been feeling some heat over the murders since these emergency responders vanished after responding to a mass casualty event in Rafah. Their bodies were found buried about a week later. (See [“BODIES OF 8 PALESTINIAN MEDICS RECOVERED AFTER REPORTEDLY BEING]

MOWED DOWN BY IDF TROOPS WHILE RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY CALLS," 1 Apr 2025.)

Israel initially tried to cover for its forces and claimed that the ambulances in the convoy were "advancing suspiciously," and without their headlights on, which resulted in the shooting that killed eight rescuers from the Red Crescent, six Civil Defense workers, and a UN staff member.

Israel has said that nine of those killed were militants.

The paper said it received the video from a senior diplomat at the UN and verified the contents.

The video was filmed in Rafah in the early morning hours on 23 March. The paper said the video showed ambulances and firetrucks with their lights flashing when they reached a vehicle with injured people.

Two rescue workers could be seen getting out of the fire truck and ambulance that the paper said were clearly marked.

It was at this point that the pops of gunfire could be heard. The paper said the firing lasted for five minutes and the paramedic who had been filming could be heard reciting a Muslim prayer said right before death.

"Forgive me, mother. This is the path I chose… to help people. Allahu akbar," he said.

The paper said he was later found in the mass grave with a bullet in his head.

The BBC reported that an IDF official said Saturday that the soldiers involved in the shooting were forced to fire on a car that contained three Hamas members just a little while earlier. The IDF claimed that aerial surveillance monitors alerted that the convoy had been "advancing suspiciously."

The IDF said the soldiers "assumed they were under threat and opened fire" when the convoy stopped in the road to respond to the car that was fired upon.

The Israeli military admitted to reporters that its first story about the shooting and how the emergency vehicles were not flashing their lights was inaccurate. The Israeli officials told reporters that the bodies were buried in a shallow grave to protect them from animals, the BBC report said.

The IDF said it will investigate, but Palestinians have called for an independent investigation.

TRENDPOST: *The Palestine Red Crescent Society said the video footage obtained from the cellphone "unequivocally refutes the occupation's claims that Israeli forces did not randomly target ambulances, and that some vehicles had approached 'suspiciously without lights or emergency markings'."*

The Trends Journal *has reported extensively on how the Israelis have targeted humanitarian aid workers, hospitals, and medical professionals for the last 17 months as it carries out its punishment campaign that it hopes ends with Gaza being ethnically cleansed. (See "WHERE'S THE OUTRAGE? ISRAEL 'CONSISTENTLY BREACHED INTERNATIONAL LAW' IN GAZA: TOP UN OFFICIAL SAYS" 4 Mar 2025, "ISRAELI FORCES STORM NORTHERN GAZA HOSPITAL, KILLING DOCTORS, CIVILIANS" 10 Dec 2024 and "NO BIG DEAL: ISRAEL CARRIES OUT AIRSTRIKE IN NORTHERN GAZA, KILLING AT LEAST 9 HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS" 18 Mar 2025.)*

But have no fear!…The Israelis said they will investigate the shooting.

They should also investigate why bulldozers were used to bury the rescue workers in a mass grave and reportedly did not communicate the incident for a week to Palestinian officials—who only found out about their fate after finding the bodies.

ISRAEL RAMPS UP GAZA GENOCIDE

The Israeli military asserted itself on the ground in northern Gaza last week as the IDF issued new evacuation orders amid its renewed bombing campaign across the war-torn enclave.

The IDF announced on Friday that it has sent troops into the eastern part of Gaza City to expand the “security zone.”

Reuters reported Thursday that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have fled from their homes last week as Israeli troops seize more territory. The report called the displacement “one of the biggest mass exoduses of the war.”

The Israelis bombed three schools that were operating as shelters across Gaza City, including Dar al-Arqam, which is in Gaza City’s Tuffah neighborhood that resulted in at least 29 deaths, according to Truth Out. The report noted that nearly 100 people were injured or stuck under the rubble.

The Israelis said they targeted Hamas in the strike on the Tuffah school.

The report, citing the Gaza Health Ministry, said more than 100 bodies were delivered to barely functioning hospitals across the enclave in the last 24 hours.

The Israelis have intensified their bombing campaign across Gaza ever since the ceasefire deal that was agreed upon before U.S. President Donald Trump’s inauguration fell apart after Israel insisted that Phase 1 of the agreement be extended instead of implementing Phase 2, which would have called for the rapid removal of Israeli troops from the enclave.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that Israel intends to create a new security boundary, called the Morag corridor, that would essentially cut off Rafah,

which is in Gaza's south, from the rest of the enclave, according to the Associated Press. The Israeli leader likened the project to "a second Philadelphi corridor."

Netanyahu said, "We are cutting up the strip, and we are increasing the pressure step by step, so that they will give us our hostages."

The AP, citing the UN, reported that 60 percent of Gaza is considered a "no-go" zone after the recent evacuation orders. A spokesman from the UN's humanitarian office said hundreds of thousands of Gazans are now living in tents along the coast or have returned to their "destroyed homes."

Israel Katz, the defense minister, told reporters that the new offensive is intended to seize "extensive territory" inside the enclave. He said in a statement obtained by *The Times of Israel* that IDF troops will be deployed to clear areas "of terrorists and infrastructure, and capture extensive territory that will be added to the State of Israel's security areas."

TREND FORECAST: *Israel cannot kill enough Gazans to face any international blowback so the genocide will continue until the Gazans are either forced out or killed.*

The Trends Journal *has reported for months that Trump has assembled the most pro-Israel Cabinet in recent memory—and that's saying something in the U.S.—where members believe they have a biblical devotion to Israel. (See "TRUMP SENDS $7.4B IN WEAPONS FOR ISRAEL TO KEEP THE GENOCIDE AND WARS GOING" 11 Feb 2025 and "TRUMP-APPOINTED BOARD MEMBER OF U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL SAYS GAZANS ARE 'EVIL,' NOT WORTHY OF 'MERCY'" 4 Feb 2025.)*

Trump celebrated the election win of Randy Fine in the special election for Mike Waltz's seat in Congress. (Waltz is Trump's national security adviser.)

Fine was backed by Trump, despite posting grotesque messages on X—celebrating the massacre of Gazans by the U.S.-backed IDF, which fits in well with the Trump White House.

ISRAELI GENOCIDE: PALESTINIANS WILL BE REMOVED FROM GAZA

Israel is keen on implementing U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to ethnically cleanse Gaza of Palestinians once Hamas is defeated, a senior Israeli official said last week.

The IDF has resumed its bombing campaign inside Gaza after the ceasefire with Hamas dissolved when Israel tried to force the Gazan group to agree to an extended Phase 1 of the deal instead of beginning Phase 2, which would have resulted in Israeli troops being pulled from the enclave.

One Israeli official, who was traveling with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Hungary last week, told reporters that the government would like to "rescue the hostages, eliminate Hamas, and that there is a large-scale opportunity for voluntary migration," according to *Haaretz.*

Top Israelis have held rallies and stated clearly that they do not accept a future with Palestinians still living in the enclave.

Last month, there was a rally held that was called, "This Time We Must Triumph—Occupy, Expel, Settle," which drew top politicians.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, the head of the Jewish Power party, maintained his position that the Palestinians inside the enclave should be starved out so they eventually agree to "voluntary emigration." (See "EMBOLDENED ISRAELIS HOLD RALLY, DEMAND THAT GAZA IS EMPTIED," 4 Mar 2025.)

The Israeli official told *Haaretz* that the country is now focused solely on dismantling Hamas.

“Who says the enemy won’t break? Some captures may want to escape, allowing us to extract people,” the official said.

There are 59 hostages still in Hamas captivity.

A senior Palestinian official told *The Times of Israel* last week that Hamas is willing to free all remaining hostages in return for a permanent ceasefire, which Israel has rejected.

“The number of hostages is not the issue,” the Palestinian official told the paper. “If Israel demonstrates its intention to reach a permanent ceasefire, [Hamas is] prepared to release all of the hostages. Israel only wants a partial agreement so that it can continue fighting. It wants [Hamas] to give up all the hostages without entering the second phase.”

TRENDPOST: *Trump said Gaza is uninhabitable and the enclave will eventually need to be cleared out so it can be rebuilt. He said, “You know, Gaza is interesting…it’s a phenomenal location…on the sea…the best weather. You know, everything’s good, some beautiful things can be done with it.”*

Trump said the U.S. should “take over” Gaza and Palestinians should be forced out and not allowed to return. He dreams of turning Gaza into the “Riviera of the Middle East.”

Israelis have praised what they saw as Trump’s “bold vision” for the enclave, even though ethnic cleansing has been the government’s true goal since the start of the genocide. (See “ISRAEL PRAISES TRUMP’S ‘BOLD VISION’ FOR GAZA” 11 Feb 2025, “AS WE REPORTED LAST MARCH, TRUMP’S SON-IN-LAW KUSHNER BOASTED TO EXPEL PALESTINIANS FROM GAZA AND DEVELOP ‘WATER-FRONT’ PROPERTY” 11 Feb 2025, “ISRAEL APPLAUDS TRUMP’S ‘BUY’ GAZA PLAN” 11 Feb 2025 and “TRUMP DOUBLE DOWNS ON MOVING GAZANS TO JORDAN, EGYPT” 4 Feb 2025.)

The senior Israeli official who spoke with Haaretz was asked about the risks that these hostages face as Israel continues its bombing campaign.

“It doesn’t matter if they die—it does, it’s terrible, but they are suffering,” the official said.

The Trump administration and Israelis have reached out to regional allies to discuss the removal of Palestinians, and the reception has been cold, but the Israeli official said they could be enticed—“not necessarily money, but also something strategic.”

CO-SPONSORS OF GENOCIDE: U.S. SENATE REJECTS RESOLUTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE BLOCKED BILLIONS IN WEAPONS TO ISRAEL

The murderous U.S. Senate on Thursday easily rejected two resolutions introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., that would have blocked $8.8 billion in arms sale to the Genocidal State of Israel, which was just the latest example of how servile American politicians are to Israel and its powerful lobby.

The first resolution, S.J. Resolution 33, aimed to block about $2 billion in arms that included 35,000 MK 84 2,000-pound bombs and the other resolution, S.J. Resolution 26, was intended to stop the flow of $7 billion in weapons—which included 500-pound bombs and kits that can turn “dummy” bombs into precision ones, WSWS reported.

The first resolution fell in a 15-82 vote and the second one failed in a vote that also got just 15 supporters.

WSWS reported that there was bipartisan backing for continued bloodshed in Gaza, with a grand total of zero Republicans voting to stop the arms and most Democrats siding with Republicans.

Sanders addressed the body before the vote and said, “If we condone the barbarism that is taking place in Gaza today, we will have no standing in the world to condemn the horror and war crimes that other countries may commit,” WSWS reported.

He continued, “You’re not going to be able to look at China or Russia or Saudi Arabia or any other country and say, ‘Look, how terrible, look what they are doing to the children, to the women, innocent people.’ We will have no credibility because they will come back and say, ‘Really? You are really concerned with what China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia might be doing? Hey, take a look at what you supported in Gaza and the billions of dollars and aid you gave to [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu’s government’.”

Sanders cited statistics from UNICEF that said more than 1,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel renewed its genocide, including over 300 children. He said 600 children have been wounded.

“Today, it is 31 days and counting with absolutely no humanitarian aid getting into Gaza,” he said. “Nothing. No food, no water, no medicine, no fuel, for over a month. That is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, the Foreign Assistance Act, and basic human decency. It is a war crime. You don’t starve children.”

Sanders may as well have been talking to an empty chamber, knowing full well that the resolutions would be easily defeated. *The Times of Israel* noted how there is a majority of Republicans in the Senate and just a small minority of Democrats “willing to vote against Israel.”

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., who recently gave a 25-hour speech on the Senate floor to protest U.S. President Trump’s policies (without mentioning Gaza once)—was one of the Democrats to support the continued arms sales to Israel.

WSWS noted the boundless hypocrisy from Booker, who, a day before voting to make sure Israel has enough bombs to drop on Gaza, he posted on X: “This is a moral moment. It is not left or right, it is right or wrong.”

Josh Paul, who resigned from his post in the State Department in protest of the genocide, told Truth Out that U.S. senators would be lining up to block such weapons transfers "if any other country in the world was using American bombs to kill thousands of innocent people."

He continued: "Continued unfettered arms sales to Israel enables gross human rights violations and will keep Israel from coming back to the negotiating table after a broken ceasefire."

Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho, the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, followed Sanders's speech and said, "They would abandon Israel, our closest ally in the Middle East, during a pivotal moment for global security."

TRENDPOST: *We don't say this lightly, but it is clear that Palestinian lives do not matter to politicians in Washington or the Western mainstream media. If Palestinians killed 1,000 Israelis since 18 March—including 300 children (who are being starved in a blockade), there would be a media frenzy and U.S. troops would be deployed and it would be labeled Holocaust 2.0.*

But the facts of Israel's daily slaughter of Palestinians are ignored by the media and supported by the U.S. and other Western nations. (See "BARBARIAN NETANYAHU SAYS U.S. PROTESTERS FOR GAZA PEACE STAND FOR 'BARBARISM'" 1 Apr 2025, "NOT WORTHY OF NEWS COVERAGE IN U.S.: ACUTE MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN IN NORTHERN GAZA JUMPS AMID ISRAEL'S BLOCKADE" 18 Mar 2025, "UNICEF: ISRAEL'S GAZA WAR IS A WAR AGAINST CHILDREN" 26 Mar 2024 and "UN: OK FOR ISRAEL TO KILL PALESTINIAN CHILDREN, BUT SHAMES RUSSIA FOR KILLING CHILDREN IN UKRAINE" 27 Jun 2023.)

The WSWS noted that fewer Democrats voted in favor of the resolutions than did in November—during the Biden administration. These Democrats included Sens. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, both from Georgia, and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.

Ahmad Abuznaid, executive director for U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action, told Truth Out: "We're witnessing a U.S.-funded genocide, paid for by the billions with

our tax dollars. U.S. military funding for Israel's war crimes is not in the interests of the American people and yet our representatives today voted to continue aiding and abetting human rights violations of the Palestinian people."

HUNGARY EMBRACES GENOCIDE KING NETANYAHU, WITHDRAWS FROM THE ICC

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was enveloped in warmth during his visit last week to Budapest last week to meet with Hungary's Premier Viktor Orbán—who announced that he withdrew his country from the International Criminal Court (ICC), which issued an arrest warrant for the Israeli for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in 2024.

Orbán accused the court of becoming too political and when "courts are driven by political considerations, then democracies cannot take part in them," according to *The Times of Israel.*

Orbán and Netanyahu joined a phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump to talk about Budapest's decision to withdraw. Axios noted that Orbán, Netanyahu, and Trump are "key international ideological allies."

Netanyahu spoke with Orbán before their meeting and told his Hungarian counterpart that it is important to "stand up to this corrupt organization that has equated a democracy that is challenged for its very existence by the most horrific terrorist powers on earth."

"The ICC directs its actions against us, fighting a just war with just means, and of course not against our tormentors," Netanyahu told Orbán, according to Axios.

Trump has already let his feelings about the court be known and one of his first moves as president was to sign an executive order to impose sanctions on members of the judicial body over "illegitimate and baseless actions" against the U.S. and Israel. (The court was also condemned by the Biden administration that accused it of unfairly rushing to seek arrest warrants and cited what it saw as "troubling process errors.") (See "TRUMP IMPOSES SANCTIONS ON ICC AFTER ACCUSING IT OF UNFAIRLY TARGETING ISRAEL, U.S.," 11 Feb 2025.)

As a member state of the ICC—which signed the founding document in 1999—it was incumbent upon Budapest to arrest Netanyahu and hand him over to the court, but *The Times of Israel* noted that Netanyahu was treated like a king. He was "given full honors by Hungary wherever he went. Israeli and Hungarian flags lined the bridges across the Danube River, and Orban hosted Netanyahu for a lavish state dinner on Thursday night."

TRENDPOST: *The red-carpet treatment for Netanyahu was a reminder of how the U.S. embraced Netanyahu in July 2024—when House Speaker Mike Johnson introduced him as "His Excellency."*

Germany's outgoing government, which has fully supported the Israeli genocide, said it would arrest Netanyahu if he visited the country and Annalena Baerbock, the foreign minister, called Netanyahu's visit to Budapest a "bad day for international criminal law," according to The Times of Israel. Friedrich Merz, the chancellor in waiting, has said he will be inviting Netanyahu to visit.

France, Poland, and Italy have all said they would not adhere to the ICC's arrest warrants against Netanyahu.

Amnesty International has called on member states to arrest the Israeli leader.

"A cornerstone principle of the ICC's founding Rome Statute is that all individuals subject to ICC arrest warrants must be arrested and surrendered to the Court without recourse to immunity when they are within the jurisdiction of ICC member states, including on their territory," it said in a statement.

The U.S. and Israel are not members of the court. Netanyahu said these warrants are nothing more than an "antisemitic hate crime."

Karim Khan, the chief prosecutor who has been sanctioned by Trump, said he had reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu starved Gazan civilians as a weapon of war—a war crime.

Khan said, "The effects of the use of starvation as a method of warfare, together with other attacks and collective punishment against the civilian population of Gaza are acute, visible and widely known. … They include malnutrition, dehydration, profound suffering and an increasing number of deaths among the Palestinian population, including babies, other children, and women."

ISRAEL RAMPS UP WAR AGAINST SYRIA AND LEBANON AS NETANYAHU VISITS WHITE HOUSE

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Washington on Monday to meet with President Donald Trump to discuss issues in the Middle East as his military continued to extend its reach in Lebanon and Syria.

The New York Times reported last week that Israel is developing new outposts and military fortifications inside these countries amid what it claims is a security threat.

The Israelis claim that Hezbollah infrastructure and fighters have not retreated from the border in Lebanon, and they insist that their forces need to be positioned inside Syria since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December because of instability. Leadership from both countries have rejected the claim and called the fortifications a naked land grab.

Israeli leadership did not comment on how long its forces will remain inside these countries, creating speculation that they have no plans to leave anytime soon.

Syria

The *Times,* citing visual analysis, reported that the most significant military buildup has taken place in southern Syria. *The Wall Street Journal* published a story about Israel's new reach in Syria titled, "In Southern Syria, Israel is the Power That Matters."

The paper reported that one of the military outposts is located inside the former UN buffer zone—in Al-Hamidiyah—and the lights on the facility are "blazing even during the day, as does a Merkava tank positioned behind a berm."

The paper noted how the Israelis have been taking over farmland and erecting barriers that cut farms in half. The paper spoke to a young IDF soldier who served in Gaza and southern Lebanon and who is now in southern Syria. The soldier said the task there is to prevent villagers from crossing the area to tend to their livestock, all in the name of security.

"They don't like us. It's understandable," the soldier said.

Netanyahu has said the fall of Damascus could not have happened without the IDF's thrashing of Hezbollah and Iran, so his forces took positions in a once-demilitarized part of the Golan Heights, which has been illegally occupied by Israel since 1967. (The demilitarized zone now occupied by Israeli troops came about in 1974, during an armistice deal.)

Omar Tahan, a local Syrian leader, told the *Times*, "They say it's temporary, but based on what they're building, it seems they're preparing to stay for a while."

Lebanon

Israeli forces have occupied five outposts that they say are strategically important in protecting northern Israel from Hezbollah rockets—disregarding a key element to the initial ceasefire agreement reached in January.

The ceasefire agreement has been violated by Israel on a near-daily basis and the IDF routinely carries out airstrikes on southern Lebanon. The *Times* noted that 90,000 residents in southern Lebanon are still displaced. Many don't have a home to return to because so many have been destroyed by Israeli bombing.

The paper, again citing visual images, noted that the Israelis seem to be constructing a military installation near the southern Lebanon town of Khiam. The report noted that there was another outpost developed in the vicinity.

Reuters reported that Israel has intensified airstrikes across Lebanon in recent weeks—including on Beirut's southern suburbs.

Morgan Ortagus, the former Fox News personality and current U.S. envoy, met with Lebanon's leadership in Beirut and fully defended Israel's recent attacks.

"It's clear that Hezbollah has to be disarmed and it's clear that Israel is not going to accept terrorists shooting at them, into their country, and that's a position we understand," she said, according to the report. "We continue to press on this government to fully fulfill the cessation of hostilities and that includes disarming Hezbollah and all militias."

Israel and Hezbollah have been waging a slow-burn conflict since the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023. Hezbollah's leadership said it would stop the fighting when Israel stopped its genocide in Gaza.

The key element of the deal was that Hezbollah would retreat from south of the Litani River, and IDF troops would exit the country, based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

TRENDPOST: *Top Israeli officials have spoken about their goal of achieving a Greater Israel in the Middle East and the best route to achieve the goal is to make sure neighboring nations such as Lebanon and Syria are attacked and occupied and their civilians are attacked and bombed on a consistent basis. Netanyahu is expected to try to convince Trump to block the sale of F-35s to Turkey, which is also trying to expand its reach in Syria. (See "ISRAEL KEEPS VIOLATING CEASEFIRE DEAL—INTENSIFIES*

DEADLY STRIKES ON LEBANON" 25 Mar 2025, "ISRAEL INFLICTED ABOUT $11B IN DAMAGE ACROSS LEBANON DURING RECENT WAR" 11 Mar 2025, "ISRAEL VIOLATES HEZBOLLAH CEASEFIRE AT LEAST 129 TIMES" 10 Dec 2024, "TRUMP ADMINISTRATION GIVES ISRAEL 'GREEN LIGHT' TO VIOLATE CEASEFIRE DEAL: OK FOR IDF TO REMAIN IN LEBANON" 4 Mar 2025 and "LAND-STEAL: ISRAEL SAYS IT WILL KEEP TROOPS IN 5 LOCATIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON" 18 Feb 2025.)

Among our major concerns is the question of if Netanyahu and Trump are getting together in person to design and/or agree to a plan to attack Iran.

GAZA DEATH TOLL

The death toll inside the enclave has hit 50,752 with thousands missing under the rubble. The death toll since 18 March—when Israel resumed its bombing campaign after breaking the ceasefire—could be as high as 1,400.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Donald Trump yesterday in the White House as Israel continues to ban any aid entry into the enclave for over a month.

Netanyahu and Trump spoke privately about Gaza but did not reveal anything new to reporters at the White House about any policy changes. Netanyahu mentioned Trump's idea of taking over the enclave and said, "The president has a vision. Countries are responding to that vision. We're working on it."

WEDNESDAY: The UN announced that more than 1,000 Gazans have been killed since Israel abandoned the ceasefire and renewed its brutal bombing campaign across the enclave on 18 March.

About 100 Gazans were killed in the previous 24 hours—including at least 27 sheltering inside a UN clinic in Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

THURSDAY: Gaza's Ministry of Health said 112 Gazans have been killed since dawn by Israeli air strikes, according to Middle East Eye. The majority of the killings (70) occurred in Gaza City.

The report said the number represents the deadliest day in Gaza since Israel resumed its fighting.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released a statement that said 39,384 children inside Gaza have lost at least one parent amid Israel's genocide. Of those, about 17,000 children have lost both parents.

"The Gaza Strip is suffering from the largest orphan crisis in modern history," the agency said. The agency also noted that at least 17,954 children have been killed in Israeli strikes. That number includes 274 newborns and 876 infants who did not reach their first birthday.

FRIDAY: Israel killed at least 30 Gazans across the enclave—including 16 from one family in an airstrike on a building in Khan Yunis. Haaretz reported that women and children were among the dead.

"Children are dying, and none of them care," a relative told the paper. "May they have mercy on the babies and children."

The report, citing Gaza's Health Ministry, said 162 people were injured in the last day.

The IDF has been evacuating Gazans as it prepares to carry out ground offensives in some of these cities.

Abu Obaida, a spokesman for Hamas, told the paper that the IDF will be operating in the town where some of the hostages are being held and they will not be moved.

“We decided not to move them from these areas and to keep them under severe security measures, but their lives are at risk. If the enemy is concerned about the lives of these hostages, it must negotiate immediately for their release,” he said.

SATURDAY: Over 60 Gazans were killed by the IDF in the last 24 hours.

Israel carried out an airstrike that killed at least 17 in Khan Younis, the Associated Press reported, citing hospital staffers.

UNICEF released a report that said at least 100 children are “reported killed or injured every day in Gaza, since the strikes resumed.”

The agency said the war has turned the enclave into a “no land” for children. About 280,000 people have been displaced in the past month.

Israel said it will continue the punishment as long as Hamas holds on to the 59 remaining hostages—of whom, 24 are believed to be still alive.

SUNDAY: At least 32 Palestinians were killed across Gaza as Israel continued to tighten its grip on the enclave. Most of the casualties were women and children, Euronews reported.

One of the Israeli strikes targeted a tent and a house in Khan Younis that resulted in the deaths of five men, five women, and five children, according to the report. The report also said six were killed as they waited outside a bakery in Gaza City.

MONDAY: The Israelis killed at least 60 across Gaza—including two who died in a media tent outside a hospital in Khan Younis. Six other journalists were injured, the Associated Press reported.

Yousef al-Faqawi, a reporter for Palestine Today, died in the early morning blast near the Nasser Hospital.

Video footage emerged showing the tents engulfed in flames with some witnesses attempting to douse the flames with small amounts of water. A human body could be seen twitching and fully engulfed.

Footage shared online by the Quds News Network showed the tent on fire. Some people in a crowd gathered outside attempted to extinguish the flames.

The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs' Costs of War project said the IDF killed 232 journalists since the start of the war—the deadliest war for journalists ever, according to Al Jazeera.

TUESDAY: The IDF carried out bombing campaigns across Gaza that resulted in 25 deaths, Al Jazeera reported—including one of the journalists who was injured in the previous day's bombing outside Nasser Hospital.

Ahmed Mansour died from severe burns, according to the report.

THE UNITED STATES HAS BECOME A TWO-TIER COUNTRY

What has happened to the Constitutional Republic where all are equal under law?

by Philip Giraldi

I recently read an article by investigative historian Eric Zuesse, author of *America's Empire of Evil*, that began "One of the core features of nazism (not the German political Party but its core ideology) is racism, which allows some ethnicities (or "races") to be advantaged by law, and other ethnicities to be discriminated against by the law—it is, at its very core, AGAINST equal rights under law." Well, I was intrigued by what was packed into one long sentence due to recent developments in the United States and I am sure that none of my regular readers will be surprised by my view that a lot of what has gone wrong in the United States and elsewhere has been due to a racist Israel and its powerful lobbies.

Consider for a moment some initiatives undertaken by presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump that Americans who love their country should rightly find to be appalling, to include the enabling of the Jewish state's genocide in Gaza and the elevation of "antisemitism" to the status of the number one "crime" that the Department of Justice is willing to investigate and prosecute, up to and including deportation of legal residents who dare to question what is taking place in Palestine.

When I refer to America becoming two-tier I am particularly thinking of U.S. foreign policy, most particularly as it relates to the Middle East, and the operational imperatives of the Department of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General. And when I say two-tier I am suggesting that there are specific policies that are purely the product of political and economic corruption in that they do not serve any U.S. interest—indeed, I would point out how they are contrary to American interests and designed to favor Israel and the groups and billionaires that make up the Israel Lobby over other American citizens and legal residents. In practice this has meant supporting everything the state of Israel does, no matter how atrocious, while also funding, equipping and providing political cover for the slaughter of possibly as many as two-to-four hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and the deportation of three million more.

Biden and Trump have given Netanyahu the green light to turning what was once Palestine into an Eretz (Greater) Israel. That implies stealing Palestinian homes and land and eradicating their culture and religion before destroying their livelihoods as first steps in the neo-colonial process. And domestically our recent presidents have made American Jews a protected species, coddled and privileged by the government and media beyond all reason, making them a special group that cannot be criticized or held accountable no matter what they do. Few Americans know that the Department of Homeland Security's discretionary funding grants to enhance security goes more than 90 percent to Jewish groups and sites, to the tune of well over $400 million, and that does not include taxpayer funding of the proliferating so-called holocaust museums.

And recent steps to suppress social media, most notably TikTok, came about after extremist Jewish groups like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) began whining about

negative coverage of the atrocities being committed by Israel, to include exposes of Israeli corruption of U.S. Congressmen. Indeed, “antisemitism,” the symptoms of which deliberately include criticism of Israel, is the only crime that the Justice Department is willing to pursue with a Task Force, which may have Israeli intelligence officers accompanying, currently traveling throughout the nation and confronting universities with non-negotiable demands that they modify their teachings and take steps to stamp out any negative characterizations of Jews or the Jewish state.

And what is behind the shift of U.S. strategic forces to exert “Maximum Pressure” on Iran and maybe even to prepare for the destruction of that nation to benefit Benjamin Netanyahu? Yes, of course, the Persians theoretically “threaten” Israel, which has its own completely illegal nuclear arsenal obtained through theft and deception from the United States, but nobody in the U.S. government is allowed to mention that. And no one is permitted to enforce American laws if they impact on Israel, like the Leahy Law which forbids military assistance to any country that violates human rights “with impunity.” Israel clearly is qualified to be sanctioned by that standard, but no U.S. Administration has dared to enforce the law for fear that the powerful Israel Lobby will retaliate.

Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University has described the current Donald Trump regime as an “Israel First Administration” packed with Zionists at all levels. The State Department Press Secretary Tammy Bruce has already said that “Anyone who tries to touch Israel will wind up in hell.” Interestingly, most independent observers would agree that Israel is all-powerful in Washington though they would probably limit that influence to Middle Eastern foreign policy, but that is not necessarily so. Netanyahu tells Trump exactly what to do and Pete Heghseth is already an American “rapture freak” brand of alleged Christian which means he is 100 percent Zionist.

His first proclamation at being selected by Trump for Secretary of Defense was that he was going to eliminate “antisemitism” from the military. Apparently Pete never noticed the whole time he was on active duty how few Jews actually wind up in the military since they prefer that non-Jewish Americans do the dying for them. Beyond that, during the whole of Pete’s life in the U.S. there was no “antisemitism” until recently as a response to the highly visible genocide on the Gaza Strip. 22,000 children alone

have been killed by some estimates. Meanwhile some Rabbis in Israel preach Jewish superiority, that non-Jews are subhuman, deserving to be killed or enslaved.

In spite of such viewpoints openly expressed by senior representatives of the Israeli government, a prime objective of the new Trump administration is to protect Israel and Jews in all their various manifestations and there is absolutely no mandate to protect Palestinians or ordinary Americans who become victims in the violent counterattacks on peace encampments staged by local Jews and, reportedly, including some Israeli army veterans. Have any violent Israelis been arrested or deported? No? Apparently, the U.S. "justice system" is focused on serving Israel at the expense of the U.S. Constitution's protection of free speech and free association.

And what is the "Justice" Department doing about the Jewish hate organizations like Betar U.S. and Canary Mission that are helping the Trump Administration round up suspected "antisemites, terrorists, and anti-Americans" who turn out to be mostly people who are only opposed to genocide. These extremist pro-Israel groups have a history of support for terror and ethnic cleansing and they are now working closely with the Trump administration, preparing lists and dossiers of thousands of Palestine supporters it wants to see deported from the United States.

Betar U.S. describes itself as a "loud, proud, aggressive and unapologetically Zionist" movement "dedicated to defending Israel's legitimacy and strengthening the Jewish connection to the land of Israel." This includes "taking action where others won't." Its executive director Ross Glick, has, for example, met with senior government officials both under Biden and Trump and has claimed credit for the arrest and detention of Mahmoud Khalil, who was a leader of the anti-Israel demonstrations held at Columbia University last year. Lawmakers who met with Betar U.S. leadership include Democratic Senator John Fetterman and staff aides to Republican Senators Ted Cruz and James Lankford in discussions to rid the country of thousands of "terror supporters."

Donald Trump was also briefed on the issue and signed an executive order titled "Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism" that promises "the removal of resident aliens who violate our laws," to "quell pro-Hamas vandalism and intimidation" and to "investigate and punish anti-Jewish racism in leftist, anti-American colleges

and universities." He subsequently wrote on Truth Social: "We know there are more students at Columbia and other Universities across the country who have engaged in pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic, anti-American activity, and the Trump administration will not tolerate it."

One might ask "What might Betar be up to that would interest the Department of Justice?" Well, here it is: in late March, Betar may have even organized an assassination attempt on Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories and a leading critic of Israeli behavior. "Join us to give Francesca a [pager emoji] in London on Tuesday," it posted online, referring to the September pager attack on Lebanon carried out by the Israeli military that killed dozens of people and injured thousands more. The killing by pager was widely condemned as an act of international terrorism. In addition, Betar routinely threatens violence against gatherings protesting Israeli crimes. At such an event at UCLA, Betar publicly stated, "We demand police remove these thugs now and if not we will be forced to organize groups of Jews to do so." Betar has formally adopted the far-right slogan "Every Jew, a .22."

And there's more from the Zionist side, without any pushback from the Department of Justice. On March 24, an Israel-based and mostly U.S. funded group called Canary Mission posted a new feature on its website, "Uncovering Foreign Nationals," as part of its mission to identify those who harbor "hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses." The feature listed the names of seven students and instructors, including three current and former professors at Columbia University, are among thousands of people whose pictures have been posted on Canary's website since its creation ten years ago—all are accused of anti-Israeli activism.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio is boasting of how his Immigration and Customs Enforcer (ICE) thugs have detained and canceled their visas on more than 300 international students who participated in demonstrations or even only spoke up or wrote letters in support of the Palestinians. ICE is also reportedly searching through social media to identify more "troublemakers." That is not how rule of law is supposed to work, particularly as the supporters of Palestine have not been given a hearing, as the law requires, before being rounded up, stripped of their rights, and prepared for deportation. Clearly Israelis and Jews occupy the top tier in the reckoning of the U.S.

government, with the rest of us falling in place somewhere below, a formula reminiscent of police states all through history.

Nobody should be surprised at what Israel is allowed to get away with vis-à-vis the United States as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believes, perhaps correctly, that he owns Congress and the White House. In the eyes of the Trump Administration, just like Joe Biden that preceded it, Israel is by definition always blame-free and above reproach, even though our system of checks and balances and rule of law is being trashed due to the Israeli parasitical relationship with its host victim the United States. As is often the case, Australian journalist Caitlin Johnstone nails the dark side of the latest atrocity as described by State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce. Per Johnstone, "It's clear that [Bruce] has been instructed to respond to any and all questions about Israeli atrocities in Gaza by blaming everything on Hamas, without even pretending to care whether the allegations are true.

For some background, Israel has just been caught perpetrating an atrocity so monstrous and so abundantly well-evidenced that even the mainstream western press have felt obligated to report on it. Outlets like the Guardian and the BBC are covering the story of how 15 medical workers for the Red Cross, Civil Defense, and the UN were apparently handcuffed and executed one by one by Israeli forces in Rafah before being buried in a mass grave. According to Palestinian Civil Defense spokesman Mahmoud Basal, "they were each shot more than 20 times."

It is hard to believe, but based on the first ten weeks in power, the Trump administration has actually made things worse for Americans than under Biden due to the continuous threats to occupy other countries, to levy heavy tariffs on imported goods, and to punish nations like Russia and Iran if they do not agree to the conditions that the new president is laying down. As Trump and his advisers have one thing in common beyond their Zionism, that being their total ignorance on most subjects as revealed by the recent Signal chat, it is difficult to imagine what the way to avoid the clearly coming American decline and fall might be.

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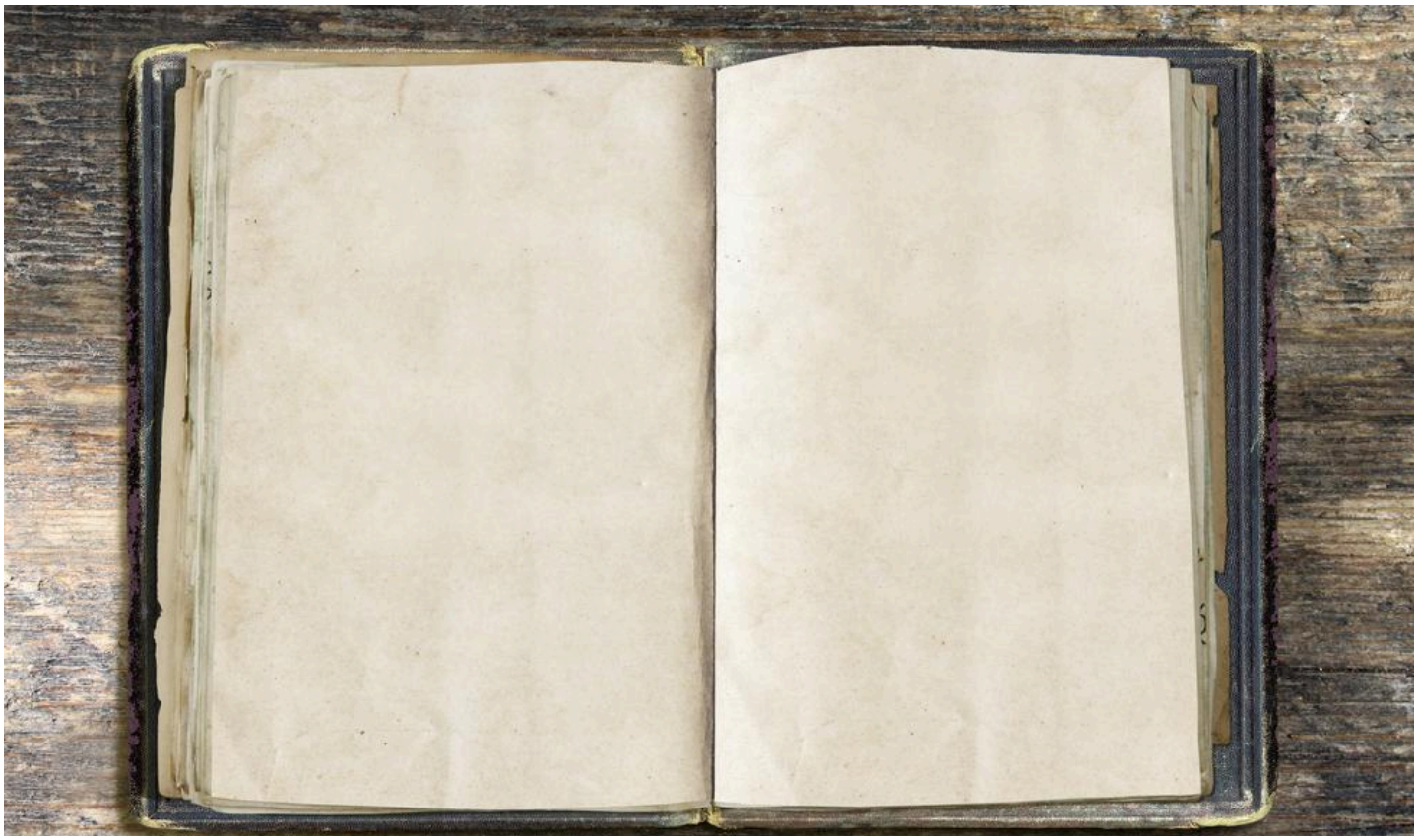

LET'S NOT FORGET

Historical amnesia can kill us in the Middle East.

by Douglas Macgregor

Americans have short memories. Even worse, many Americans don't forget, they simply never paid enough attention to know, a national characteristic that often gets the U.S. into trouble.

We may soon be in that quandary again. Americans are at the mercy of Washington's political class, which is eager to exploit the electorate's forgetfulness, acting recklessly without fear of accountability and revising the past with new lies as they move from failure to failure.

Who today remembers the Iraq War that began in 2003? Who remembers that the American military intervention was justified on the utterly false grounds that Saddam

Hussein's regime was secretly rebuilding its chemical and nuclear weapons programs?

The price of destroying Iraq while destabilizing the Middle East exceeded $2 trillion. Does anyone remember the bogus justifications for the use of American military power in 2003, the promises that were made to the public and broken, or the costs to American economic strength that had been grossly underestimated?

New conflicts are brewing in the Middle East. Yet as the buildup of American military power in the region signals the coming of a new war with Iran, how many Americans remember the consequences of previous military fiascos in Afghanistan, Korea, and Vietnam?

Opinion polls show fewer than 40 percent of Americans under 35 can accurately describe why we intervened in Iraq or the consequences that followed. As the crisis faded from trending topics, these vital lessons evaporated from public awareness like morning dew. Americans rarely verify today's claims in light of yesterday's facts.

This time, the price of forgetting promises to be exceptionally steep. Iran is Israel's nemesis, the alleged source of its perpetual struggle with neighbors, the final obstacle to the creation of Greater Israel and Israeli regional supremacy. The U.S. seems ready to attack Iran and help Israel achieve its objectives.

Of course, Iran is not alone. Egypt is also in Israel's crosshairs, as are Syria and Lebanon.

Then, there is Turkey. Turkish discontent with Israel's campaign of mass murder, the expulsion of Palestinians, and its determination to absorb southern Syria into Greater Israel is a ticking time bomb ready to explode.

In Moscow's view, Iran is the bastion that protects the soft underbelly of Russia. Iran is a natural fortress with defensible mountainous terrain, and north of Iran is important geopolitical real estate: the Eurasian steppe.

Control of Iran would offer convenient invasion routes into the major industrial centers east of the Ural Mountains. (These same industrial centers were moved there by Stalin to give the Soviet Union the breathing space to manufacture materiel for World War II.)

Equally important, Russia, emboldened by military success in Ukraine, signed what amounts to a mutual defense pact with Tehran. Given Russia's demonstrated technological superiority in the production of precision-guided missiles like the Oreshnik, it would be a serious mistake to discount the quality and impact of Russian military assistance to Iran in a future conflict with the U.S. and Israel.

Beijing's support for Iran arises from a strategic imperative. Iran's oil, gas, and mineral resources are important to China's industrial expansion. Iran is also a vital component of the greater Eurasian trading network that is critical to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI serves as the contemporary equivalent of the Silk Road, building the modern transportation infrastructure for commerce across the vast Eurasian landmass.

As in the past, when Persian Kings, Turkic Sultans, and Mongolian Khans controlled the Silk Road, Beijing will leave the administration of BRI to the states in Eurasia to manage trade flows. This frees Beijing to focus on industrial production.

Why is China determined to protect the BRI? Because it is a key tool of resistance against U.S. containment. Countries that trade with China and grow wealthy over time will not side with Washington against Beijing. Thus, the BRI is a non-military strategy for economic diplomacy to prevent Washington from isolating and eventually invading China.

In sum, Iran, Russia, and China share interests that support continued geostrategic interaction. It's why both Beijing and Moscow come to Tehran's aid if needed. At present, their support takes the form of technology transfers and economic assistance, but if U.S. and Israeli forces escalate the use of force, they will do so as well.

In an American-Israeli war with Iran, Moscow and Beijing will have escalation dominance, which suggests that Washington risks fighting a war that it is predestined

to lose, just as the U.S. fought hopeless wars in Vietnam and Iraq and is losing a proxy war in Ukraine. Historical amnesia exacts a heavy price indeed, particularly when Washington ignores the strategic interests of its rivals.

Today, America faces a troubling future we can already glimpse forming on the horizon. A nation without shared memory becomes vulnerable to manipulation, unable to learn from mistakes, and gradually loses its identity and national power.

In 1897, Rudyard Kipling composed a poem crafted to remind the British people, especially their ruling class, of the transient nature of British imperial power. The closing words of his poem should resonate with Americans today:

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

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MICROPLASTICS ACCUMULATE IN YOUR BRAIN MORE THAN OTHER ORGANS

by Dr. Joseph Mercola

Story at-a-glance

- Research shows microplastics become trapped in brain blood vessels when consumed by immune cells, leading to reduced blood flow and impaired cognitive function in mice
- Human brain tissue contains seven to 30 times more microplastic contamination than other organs, with particularly high concentrations found in individuals diagnosed with dementia
- Researchers identified a direct pathway for microplastics to enter your brain through your nose, bypassing the blood-brain barrier via the olfactory system

- Polypropylene, a common plastic used in packaging and consumer goods, was found in over 40 percent of brain tissue samples, highlighting the impact of everyday plastic exposure
- Practical solutions such as water filtration, choosing natural fiber clothing and using non-plastic food packaging help reduce your microplastic exposure

Everywhere you look, plastic is a part of modern life. From packaging to clothing, it's almost inescapable. However, what you might not realize is that plastic is not just around you; it's increasingly accumulating inside you. Microscopic plastic particles, known as microplastics and nanoplastics, are now globally recognized as a pervasive environmental pollutant, contaminating air, water and food sources.

The rising levels of microplastic pollution are triggering significant concerns about their impact on human health. Scientists are beginning to understand just how deeply these tiny particles penetrate our bodies and what damage they cause.

In fact, research now suggests that microplastics are not only reaching your brain but are also actively disrupting its function. These findings signal a public crisis for neurological health and warrant taking proactive steps to minimize your exposure to microplastic pollution.

Micron-Sized Plastics Clog Tiny Brain Blood Vessels

A 2025 study published in *Science Advances* explored a mechanism by which microplastics directly impact brain function.[1] The study used advanced imaging techniques to observe, in real-time, the effects of microplastics on the brains of mice. Not only were microplastics present in the brain, but they actively disrupted normal brain function by physically blocking blood flow within the brain's delicate network of vessels.

- **Investigating the effects of microplastics in the human brain**—To understand how microplastics behave in the brain, the researchers used a sophisticated technique called miniature two-photon microscopy. This allowed them to peer into the brains of awake mice and visualize blood vessels at a depth that was previously unattainable.

Researchers introduced fluorescent microplastic particles into the mice and then tracked their movement within the cerebral cortex, the outer layer of the brain responsible for higher-level functions like thought and voluntary movement.

- **Microplastics cause obstructions in your brain**—The images captured through the microscopy revealed that microplastics, once in the bloodstream, are quickly engulfed by immune cells. These immune cells, designed to protect the body by engulfing foreign invaders, inadvertently become carriers of the plastic pollutants. The research team termed these plastic-filled immune cells microplastic-labeled cells, or MPL-Cells.

  Researchers revealed that MPL-Cells, laden with microplastics, became trapped within the narrow capillaries of the brain's cortex, causing physical obstructions that directly impeded blood flow.

- **The size of the plastic particles played a role in this obstruction**—The researchers further noted that larger 5-micrometer microplastics were far more likely to cause these blockages compared to smaller 2-micrometer and especially tiny 0.08-micrometer particles.

- **The consequences of these microplastic-induced blockages are significant**—The reduced blood flow in the brain leads to a cascade of neurological problems. The study used laser speckle contrast imaging to confirm that blood perfusion—the flow of blood through the brain tissue—was indeed reduced in areas where MPL-Cells were obstructing vessels.

- **Poor blood flow triggers neurological and cognitive effects**—This diminished blood supply starves brain tissue of essential resources and triggers a range of neurobehavioral abnormalities, affecting everything from movement to cognitive function.

To assess these neurological impacts, the researchers put the microplastic-treated mice through a series of behavioral tests. In open-field tests, which measure

exploratory behavior and anxiety, mice exposed to microplastics moved significantly less and at slower speeds compared to control groups.

Further, in Y-maze tests designed to evaluate spatial memory and working memory, the microplastic-treated mice showed a marked reduction in spatial memory. Even simple motor coordination was affected, indicating impaired balance and endurance. These behavioral changes, the researchers noted, mirrored depressive states often associated with disrupted cerebral blood flow.

Human Brains Hold More Microplastics Than Other Organs

A 2025 study published in *Nature Medicine* also revealed concerning findings about the extent of microplastic contamination within our bodies.[2] The researchers analyzed samples from human livers, kidneys and brains, comparing microplastic levels across these different tissues. The brain turned out to be a significant collection point for microplastics, accumulating far more of these pollutants than other major organs.

- **Brain tissue contains dramatically higher microplastic concentrations**—Across the board, brain samples contained substantially higher concentrations of total microplastics compared to both liver and kidney tissues. In fact, brain tissue harbored, on average, seven to 30 times more microplastics than the other organs examined.

  When looking at the types of plastic polymers present, polyethylene emerged as the most prevalent in all tissues. Polyethylene is one of the most common plastics produced globally, used extensively in packaging, films and various consumer products.

- **Microplastic levels are increasing over time**—By comparing tissue samples collected in 2016 to those from 2024, the researchers found a marked increase in microplastic concentrations in both liver and brain tissue over this relatively short eight-year period. This upward trajectory suggests that as environmental microplastic pollution worsens, our internal body burden also escalates.

- **Dementia-affected brains contain even higher microplastic concentrations**—Disturbingly, when analyzing brain tissue from individuals with diagnosed dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, researchers found higher concentrations of microplastics compared to brain tissues from individuals without dementia.

  In fact, microplastic levels in dementia brains were several times greater than even the already elevated levels found in "normal" brain samples.

The difference in microplastic burden in dementia brains raises serious questions about the role of these pollutants in neurodegenerative conditions. Microscopic examination of the brain tissue provided further visual evidence of plastic contamination—the researchers observed shard-like nanoplastic fragments within the brain parenchyma, the functional tissue of the brain.

In brains with dementia, these fragments were notably concentrated in areas with inflammatory cells and along the walls of blood vessels.

Nasal Passages Offer Direct Route for Microplastics to Your Brain

Adding to the mounting evidence of microplastic invasion of the brain, a 2024 case series published in *JAMA Network Open* pinpoints a startlingly direct pathway for these pollutants to reach your brain: your nose.[3] This research specifically investigated the olfactory bulb, the region of your brain directly connected to your nasal passages and responsible for your sense of smell.

- **Researchers examined the olfactory bulbs of deceased people**—The 15 individuals included in this study had lived in São Paulo, Brazil, for at least five years. They analyzed both tissue samples and digested tissue filtrates from these olfactory bulbs. This dual approach ensured that microplastics both on the surface and embedded within the tissue were detected.

- **Microplastics were detected in the olfactory bulbs of over half—eight out of 15—of the individuals studied**—In total, 16 distinct synthetic polymer particles

and fibers were identified within these brain tissues. The majority, 75 percent, were particles, with the remainder being fibers.

Among the particles, fragments were more common than spheres. The size of these microplastics was also notable, ranging from 5.5 to 26.4 micrometers for particles, and with fiber lengths averaging 21.4 micrometers.

- **Their miniscule size allows easy inhalation**—These dimensions are small enough to be inhaled and penetrate deep into the nasal passages, reaching the delicate olfactory bulb at the base of your brain. Breaking down the types of plastic, polypropylene was the most prevalent polymer found, accounting for 43.8 percent of the identified microplastics.[4]

- This is particularly relevant because polypropylene is one of the most widely produced plastics globally, used extensively in packaging, textiles and consumer goods.

- **Everyday exposures contribute to microplastic buildup**—The presence of polypropylene, along with other common plastics like polyamide (nylon), polyethylene vinyl acetate and polyethylene, strongly suggests that everyday exposure to these materials in indoor and outdoor environments is contributing to their accumulation in the olfactory bulb.

- **The researchers propose a clear anatomical pathway for this invasion**—They highlight the cribriform plate, a porous bone at the base of the skull that separates the nasal cavity from the brain, as the key gateway. Olfactory neurons, responsible for your sense of smell, extend from your nasal cavity, through tiny perforations in the cribriform plate, directly into the olfactory bulb.

- **This direct connection bypasses the blood-brain barrier**—This is the body's usual defense against bloodborne pathogens, offering a uniquely vulnerable route for inhaled microplastics to enter brain tissue.

Furthermore, the study points out that cerebrospinal fluid, which surrounds and cushions your brain, also drains partly through lymphatic vessels along these olfactory axons, which could facilitate the transport of particles from the nasal mucosa into the brain.

Previous research has already shown that black carbon particles, another common air pollutant, accumulate in the olfactory bulb, and epidemiological studies have linked exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air pollution, which often includes microplastics, to neurological and psychiatric disorders, including dementia.[5]

The JAMA Network Open study provides a tangible, physical mechanism for how this might be happening, demonstrating that the olfactory pathway is not just a route for odors, but also a direct entry point for microplastic pollution to reach your brain.

Take Action Now to Reduce Your Microplastic Exposure

Knowing how microplastics threaten your brain and overall health, it's important to take proactive steps to minimize your exposure. While the scale of environmental plastic pollution is immense, there are significant changes you can make in your daily life to reduce your personal burden of these harmful particles.

1. **Upgrade your water filtration and ditch plastic bottles**—Since microplastics are prevalent in tap water, filtering your drinking water is no longer optional, it's essential. Invest in a high-quality water filter specifically designed to remove microplastics and make sure it's certified to do so. If you must buy bottled water, opt for glass bottles instead of plastic.

   Further, if you have hard tap water, boiling it before use dramatically reduces microplastics.[6] This is a simple, yet powerful action to reduce your microplastics exposure with every cup of tea or when preparing meals.

2. **Make smart food packaging choices**—Plastic packaging is a major source of microplastic contamination in your food. Become a label detective and choose products packaged in glass whenever possible. When storing food at home, swap out plastic wrap and plastic containers for safer non-plastic alternatives.

By making these conscious choices, you significantly lessen the amount of plastic that comes into direct contact with the food you and your family consume. Further, make it a firm rule in your home to never microwave food in plastic containers. Heat causes plastics to leach even more chemicals directly into your meals.

3. **Re-evaluate your kitchen essentials**—Small changes in your kitchen can lead to big reductions in plastic exposure. One easy swap is to replace plastic cutting boards with wooden or glass alternatives. Plastic cutting boards degrade over time, shedding microplastics directly into your food as you chop and prepare meals.

   Switching to wood or glass not only minimizes this plastic shedding but also provides more durable and often more hygienic surfaces. If you are still using plastic utensils, consider replacing them with stainless steel options.

4. **Choose natural fibers and conscious clothing care**—The clothes you wear are another source of microplastic exposure, especially if you frequently wear synthetic fabrics like polyester. Whenever you can, choose clothing and home textiles made from natural fibers such as organic cotton, wool and linen. For the synthetic clothes you already own, wash them less frequently.

   When you do wash synthetic items, consider using a microfiber filter in your washing machine. These filters are designed to trap the microfibers that synthetic fabrics release during washing, preventing them from flowing into the water system, back into your environment and, ultimately, your body.

5. **Consider progesterone for estrogen balance**—It's important to understand that plastics have estrogenic effects, as they contain xenoestrogens—a type of endocrine-disrupting chemical—that disrupt your hormonal balance by mimicking estrogen in your body.

This is a significant concern, as estrogen dominance, fueled by exposure to these plastic-derived chemicals and other estrogenic compounds, negatively impacts your cellular health and mitochondrial function.

While reducing plastic exposure is paramount, if you're concerned about estrogen dominance, natural progesterone offers a helpful countermeasure. Natural progesterone acts as an estrogen antagonist, mitigating some of the adverse effects of excessive estrogen exposure from environmental plastics.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Microplastics in Your Brain

Q: How do microplastics get into the brain?

A: Microplastics can enter the brain by being carried in the bloodstream and becoming trapped in tiny brain blood vessels. Another direct route is through inhalation via the nose, where they bypass the blood-brain barrier and reach the brain through the olfactory system.

Q: What health effects do microplastics have on the brain?

A: In mice, microplastics caused blocked blood flow in brain vessels, leading to impaired cognitive function, memory issues, anxiety and reduced motor coordination. In humans, higher levels of microplastics have been found in brains affected by dementia.

Q: Which types of plastics are most commonly found in the brain?

A: The most commonly found plastic in brain tissue is polypropylene, used in packaging and consumer goods, followed by polyethylene and nylon. These plastics come from everyday exposure to packaging, clothing and environmental pollution.

Q: Why does the brain accumulate more microplastics than other organs?

A: Research shows human brain tissue contains 7 to 30 times more microplastics than the liver or kidneys. This may be due to the brain's blood vessels becoming easily

obstructed by plastic-laden immune cells and the direct pathway from the nose into the brain.

Q: How can I reduce my exposure to microplastics?

A: Practical steps include filtering drinking water, avoiding plastic food packaging, switching to glass or wood kitchen tools, choosing natural fiber clothing, using microfiber filters in washing machines and addressing estrogenic effects from plastics with natural progesterone if needed.

Sources and References

1 Science Advances January 22, 2025, Vol 11, Issue 4
2 Nature Medicine February 3, 2025
3, 4, 5 JAMA Network Open September 16, 2024;7(9):e2440018, Conclusions
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A PLEA FOR ACTION AND AWARENESS: THE HYPER-DEBT BUBBLE AND THE COMING SYSTEM LOCK-UP

by Gregory Mannarino, TradersChoice.net

We, you and I, are standing on the edge of a global engineered event, *the intentional locking up of the world financial system.*

This is not theory. It's design.

We are witnessing the hyper-fueling of the global debt bubble, not to fix the system, but to delay its implosion, **to keep the illusion alive just a little longer. 1. WAR. 2. Currency purchasing power destruction, And 3. Artificially suppressed rates—these are just three of the weapons being used against us right now.**

When this debt bubble bursts it will not be a financial event, it will be a human catastrophe.

A credit freeze will be **the trigger** which allows ***them** to usher in a new monetary architecture, a central bank digital currency (CBDC), **which despite ANY Executive Order** IS their ultimate goal.

Allow me to expand on this and stay with me. This is my STRONGEST WARNING TO DATE ON THIS TOPIC, and I have covered the coming of this event for years.

Why is this my strongest warning? Because we have NEVER BEEN closer to this event becoming a reality than today. For YEARS I have sounded that alarm on what is being set up as a mechanism to BRING US TO OUR KNEES. Here I am going to show you, to the best of my ability, what will be the consequences of what THEY are working towards. ***They are THINGS, anti-life entities seeking to DESTROY, not build.** *I am also going to outline for you SPECIFIC ACTION which you need to take at the end of this writing, so take heed.*

Let's begin.

Credit is the lifeblood of the economy. A global credit market freeze is not just an economic event, it would be a total systemic breakdown.

Money velocity grinds to zero, and the real-world consequences are hunger, poverty, and chaos.

When credit/debt stops flowing supply chains will seize, access to basic goods will vanish. Food, energy, and medicine will become luxuries.

And the fear that follows, A FEAR WHICH THEY WILL FEED ON, will be weaponized to strip away freedoms, consolidate power, and push desperate people toward engineered "solutions," a new digital system of control.

I am warning you now not to cause panic, but to inspire action, resilience, and community.

Prepare yourselves.

Diversify outside the system.

Store value in real assets.

Build networks.

Stay informed.

Stay human.

RECONNECT WITH THE SOURCE.

Because when the system locks… only those who saw it coming will still be standing.

When world credit markets lock up the fallout will be catastrophic, and I don't use that word lightly.

You are not powerless. You were never meant to be passive observers. You are the resistance to a system built on illusion and debt. You are the firewall. But only if you act.

A clearer spiritual stand: *This is not just economic warfare. It's spiritual. These 'anti-life entities' want your mind, your body, your soul. And they will disguise control as convenience, and slavery as security. Do not submit. Reclaim your divine authority.*

An affirmation of unity: *We are not alone. And we are not small. There are millions of us across nations, across faiths, across timelines who see what's coming and refuse to bow. Stay connected. Stay grounded. Stay unshakable.*

A final line to pierce the noise: Lions! *Let them hear our roar, not in fear, but in truth. The debt bubble will burst, but **we will not**. We are not victims of their system. We are the beginning of something new.*

by Joe Doran

‘NEUROMARKETING’ WILL PUT THE SQUEEZE ON YOUR MIND TO EAT GMO AND GE CITRUS

Researchers at the University Florida have been studying consumer attitudes concerning Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) foods and Genetically Edited (GE) foods.

Their goal?

They are out to come up with the most effective ways to manipulate consumers into becoming more accepting of both artificially redesigned synthetic foods.

The supposed reasons seem noble enough of course.

Via GMO techniques (where genes from two or more sometimes vastly different organisms are combined), and GE techniques (where genes within a single organism are edited to design enhancements or disable undesired traits), researchers say they can make citrus crops “better” in a myriad of ways.

But the obstacle, in their view, is that many people have a negative opinion of these man-made food redesigns.

In 2021, when GMO was already well established as a technique, and GE via CRISPR tech was fast becoming practical, the researchers found people took a generally dim view of GMOs, and didn’t know the technical differences between GMOs and GE.

University of Florida researchers have been gauging ways to change attitudes about both, according to a report this past week in citrus industry outlet thepacker.com.

Bachir Kassas, an assistant professor of food and resource economics at the university’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, said they’ve found that “positively framed information” was more effective at swaying opinions than when the stakes were “negatively framed”:

> *“Efficient educational and marketing campaigns are critical to the successful commercialization of CRISPR food products, especially given the resistance genetically modified foods have faced in the market.”*
> *(“New study seeks to assess consumer acceptance of citrus gene editing - The Packer - Fruit and Vegetable Industry’s Leading News Source,” 3 Apr 2025.)*

What Kassas terms education, might as easily be termed pro bio-gentech propaganda by opponents of genetically redesigned and modified foods.

His professional training as a “behavioral economist” should give some indication of his behavioral modification pedigree.

Citrus "Crisis" Used to Push Gene-Editing to Yet Another Food Group

There's always an urgent reason why genetic food redesigners propose their interventions.

Preventing existential maladies of crops and industries, bolstering crops yields and "food security," combatting changing climates caused by "climate crisis," and enhancing foods for "better nutrition," etc.

In this case, "citrus greening," a blight affecting Florida's citrus industry, is the culprit fueling the ambitions of University of Florida researchers.

They contend that genetically modifying and editing Florida citrus is the only way to ensure that the industry in that state survives and flourishes.

Whatever the merits of their claims, many might argue that these factors do not alter the right of people to know the provenance and attributes of the foods they consume.

Neuromarketing Needed to Reprogram Minds to Accept GMO and GE Foods

Instead of neutral and prominent disclosure, Kassas and fellow researchers are now embarked on what they term Neuromarketing techniques to condition consumers to have more favorable attitudes toward GMO and GE foods.

He commented regarding current development of such techniques:

> *"The idea is to test different formats of informational message[s] to see what the most effective way is of communicating with consumers to improve acceptance and increase willingness to pay for products made from gene edited citrus…*
>
> *"…We're looking at different ways to communicate with people, and we're looking at what is the most effective way to help them understand how useful this technology might be for the economy, for sustainability, even for them to get the products that meet their demands and preferences."*

TRENDPOST: *Clear and prominent labeling of genetically altered foods is unfortunately something that the Big Bio-Ag industry has managed to avoid being held accountable for providing, along with traditional safety testing. See "SYNTHETIC FOOD, SYNTHETIC SAFETY" 5 Dec 2023.)*

Perhaps that's because they indeed retain a preference for natural and organic foods, when presented with the choice in an agenda and value-neutral way.

As Kassas put the dilemma regarding Florida citrus:

> *"It's one thing to develop the varieties that will help you circumvent citrus greening, but if people will not buy these varieties, then we didn't really solve the problem [in a way that will allow] stakeholders to still sell their produce. So, for us to have a viable solution, we need to be able to market it. We need to make sure that it's profitable for the stakeholders."*

As Kassas is no doubt fully aware, consumers presented with clear labeling and objective third party assessments of GMO and GE wouldn't help sell genetically redesigned Florida citrus now, would it?

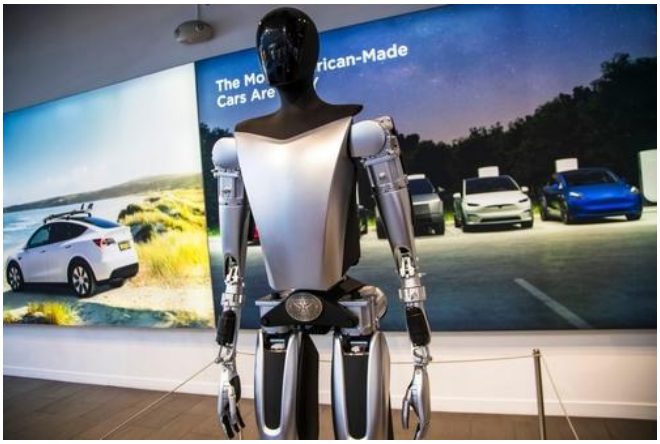
In these pages of ***The Trends Journal****, we have long forecast gene edited and modified food proliferation, and indeed, "gene edited everything."*

For related reading on that, see:

- *"CRISPR CREATOR SAYS GENE EDITING JUST GETTING STARTED" (22 Jun 2021)*
- *"GENETIC MODIFICATIONS BEING PREPPED TO 'SOLVE' EVERYTHING" (18 Jan 2022)*
- *"SYNBIO AND BIO PHARMA: YES, THERE'S HUGE UPSIDE" (15 Mar 2022)*
- *"SELLING THE SYNTHETIC UNREAL" (12 Apr 2022)*
- *"THE TRANSHUMAN WAR HAS ALREADY BEGUN" (29 Mar 2022)*
- *"SELLING THE SYNTHETIC UNREAL" (12 Apr 2022)*
- *"CRISPR GENE EDITING FOR FOOD, UNFORESEEN MUTATIONS INCLUDED" (2 May 2023)*

- *“SYNTHETIC FOOD, SYNTHETIC SAFETY” (5 Dec 2023)*
- *2024 Top Trend “THE SYNTHETIC DEVOLUTION” (2 Jan 2024)*
- *“SYN CENTURY: HOW SCIENTISM MEDIATES EVERY ASPECT OF MODERN EXPERIENCE” (5 Dec 2023)*

HUMANOIDS SET TO EXPLODE AS HUMAN POPULATIONS IMPLODE: THE POST-HUMAN FEVER DREAM CONTINUES



The 20th, and now the 21st century are showing the limits of technology as an all-encompassing orientation for achieving true natural human fulfilment.

The COVID War, drone and AI battles in Europe and the middle east, and the vampiric rise of generative AI and “gene-edited everything” are just the latest examples showing how unbound technology, fueled by hubris and dehumanizing mindsets, can wreak havoc and disruption on a scale that shakes the world.

Many people who now admit the technocrat-gone-mad devastation of COVID, are nonetheless buying into fever dreams that AI and gene editing will create an “Age of Abundance.”

It will be abundant.

But not for natural humankind.

The trajectory speaks for itself. As “alien mind” physical AIs are set to explode and proliferate, and Scientism has become not only the predominant, but the only significant modern worldview, humanity itself is ebbing.

In country after country, demographics are imploding. Wealth is stratifying and has been for the entire modern technological era, which we can date from c. 1970, or the advent of the commercial computer age.

Tech-related industrial urbanization and the sunsetting of the agricultural societies had already been fueling downward human demographic trends.

Not to be underestimated, cataclysmic 20th century world and regional wars, along with technocratic dystopian systems imposed on societies, bent on massive democide (mass murders of internal populations), exterminated humans by the hundreds of millions over the course of the last hundred years.

Some of the most basic technological innovations of that period—modern fertilizers and improvements in sanitation and medicines—account for the bulk of what allowed human populations to grow and gain in longevity, despite the ravages that technology also enabled.

But in the 21st century, that cup half-empty, cup half-full dynamic is over.

The portents are there to see.

Technocraticatic transhumanists—who really, extended far enough out, are heralding a post-human future—are telling and signaling what's in store, every day.

Couched as "progress," it's anything but that, if serving or even continuing natural humanity is the goal.

Let's survey some of the latest developments and ambitions…

Humanoids Will Overtake the Auto Industry (and Humankind in Numbers)

In a recent conversation between Peter Diamandis and Vinod Khosla, an entrepreneur and venture capitalist, Khosla predicted, "Humanoid robots will be LARGER than the auto industry."

Elon was also out there on X this past week, plugging the “TeslaBot” AI Abundance narrative.

Showing some video of the latest iterations of the humanoid robots, he predicted in a 2 April X post that their uptake in the world would make them a “legion” in 2025:

> *The rate of improvement is indeed rapid.*
>
> *There will be a legion of Optimus robots this year.*

Like other technocrats including Bill Gates, OpenAI’s Sam Altman, etc., Musk also expressed new “energy realism” sentiments, which we have forecast would happen, now that it's AI and not humans, needing energy by any means necessary.

He posted:

> *As I said a few years ago, the AI scaling constraint will move from chips to voltage transformers to electricity generation.*
>
> *That is worrying for US leadership in AI long-term.*

2025 is the year that will likely mark the beginning of “Physical AI” humanoid robots replacing human work—and human workers, as we have previously forecast. See for example:

- “TECHNOCRACY BRIEFS: PRICING TARGETS WHAT YOU CAN PAY, HUMANOIDS GOING MAINSTREAM 2025, AND MAJOR OUTLET CONFIRMS ‘MIND-VASION’” (7 Jan 2025)
- “WILL AI BE JARVIS, OR SYNTHETIC TONY STARK?” (12 Mar 2024)

Though factory robotics of course are nothing new, the innovations from Chinese companies like AgiBot (alternatively known as Zhiyuan) and American manufacturers like Tesla represent another level and kind of challenge.

That's because these now ready for prime-time new technologies are powered by "intelligence" that can interact with human-level natural level communication skills courtesy of generative AI, and even autonomous capabilities made possible by agentic AI breakthroughs.

This past week, a research study made news for "definitively" confirming that the the latest generative AI from OpenAI, ChatGPT 4.5, met the famed Turing Test.

Researchers at U.C. UC San Diego set up and observed over 1,000 real-time, three-way chat sessions between human participants, AI models, and interviewers tasked with deciding which were which.

As Psychology Today, Futurism and other outlets reported, OpenAI's ChatGPT 4.5 passed the test, by showing that humans could not reliably distinguish interacting with the AI, from interacting with other humans. ("How an LLM passed the Turing Test, not by being smarter, but with the right vibe," 2 Apr 2025.)

First proposed by mathematician and early computer scientist Alan Turing, the Turing Test proposed to answer the question of when could humans assume that AI had reached human-level intelligence. Turing's answer was that when humans could no longer distinguish whether they were interacting with an AI or a human, AI could be considered to have achieved human-level intelligence.

The study abstract, post at arxiv.org, noted:

> *"We evaluated 4 systems (ELIZA, GPT-4o, LLaMa-3.1-405B, and GPT-4.5) in two randomised, controlled, and pre-registered Turing tests on independent populations. Participants had 5 minute conversations simultaneously with another human participant and one of these systems before judging which conversational partner they thought was human. When prompted to adopt a humanlike persona, GPT-4.5 was judged to be the human 73% of the time: significantly more often than interrogators selected the real human participant. LLaMa-3.1, with the same prompt, was judged to be the human 56% of the time—not significantly more or less often than the humans they were being compared to—while baseline models (ELIZA and GPT-4o) achieved win rates*

> *significantly below chance (23% and 21% respectively). The results constitute the first empirical evidence that any artificial system passes a standard three-party Turing test. The results have implications for debates about what kind of intelligence is exhibited by Large Language Models (LLMs), and the social and economic impacts these systems are likely to have."*

Not everyone believes AI has reached any appreciable real human equivalent intelligence.

[**NOTE:** This writer has personally used and interacted with ChatGPT 4.5, and found it to produce conversation and answers that marked it as an AI.]

François Chollet, a critic of LLM and other AI systems, regarding their actual "thinking" abilities, was recently profiled in an *Atlantic* piece. ("The Man Out to Prove How Dumb AI Still Is," 4 Apr 2025.)

He explained his thoughts on generative AI natural language systems in an X posted analogy:

> *When you hear about "human-level AI" being just "one LLM training run away", it's as if people building 3D printers (the kind that makes small, flimsy plastic objects) were telling you that they've nearly built an infinite matter replicator, capable of scanning and cloning any object—be it steel, gold, or diamond, be it minuscule or building-scale. "We're just one iteration away! Just need to increase spatial resolution a bit!"*
>
> *As long as you have absolutely no idea what "matter" is and how 3D printers work, it might sound sort of plausible. But if you do, it's absolutely clown shoes. The way to navigate such claims is to have a proper, formal definition of intelligence.*

But "brain scanning" AI systems, using tech developed by Anthropic, makers of the sophisticated Claude generative and agentic AI, shows that these systems are displaying unexpected planning, a sign of cognition.

Researchers found that the Claude 3.5 “haiku” model was capable of going beyond just predicting words based on probabilities from huge troves of language and communication data fed to it, as reported by techspot.com and others. (“We are finally beginning to understand how LLMs work: No, they don't simply predict word after word,” 30 Mar 2025.)

In one example, Claude used language neutral circuits to determine an answer to a question, before outputting the answer in the language in which the question was posed.

In another instance, the AI demonstrated “planning” by pre-choosing a rhyme word in a poem creation task, before moving on to construct the eventual rhyming couplet.

Overall, what is not debatable is that AI researchers and companies are pursuing the most advanced possible AI. And things like self-awareness, self-autonomy, etc. are requisite elements of high order self manifestation and deliberative action.

Achieving “intelligence” and capabilities that outstrip those of humans has long been the goal, and even given the current progress, surprisingly few remain alarmed at the implications.

Regarding physical dexterity, humanoid robot capabilities are now approaching—or even exceeding—the general capabilities of humans.

Indeed, they have been developed and designed based on human movement modeling, in order to be adept at achieving similar movements and activities.

In addition, companies have been working on providing these “physical AI” systems with the ability to learn from their environment and by observing or being trained to perform new physical tasks and movements, etc.

Add it up, and they are clearly being designed to take on tasks to supplement and even replace humans for things that require combinations of physical and “intelligence” abilities.

More Humanoid Rollout News

There were plenty of indications of the 2025 Humanoid Robot Rollout this past week.

A 6 April Fox News headline informed "World's first AI-powered industrial super-humanoid robot."

Among the abilities of Mech, created by California company Dexterity:

- Strength and reach: Mech can lift 130 pounds and position boxes 8 feet high.
- Environmental adaptability: It works at 32–122 degrees Fahrenheit, making it suited for industrial environments.
- Mech can detect things and feel its environment with up to 16 cameras for maximum task performance.
- Versatility: Mech can load trucks, palletize, depalletize, and choose orders.

A single warehouse worker could control and supervise 10 Mechs, according to its makers.

How might that affect human workers? Do the math.

Meanwhile, *The New York Times* was warning about the "Invasion of the Home Humanoid Robots."

Its 4 April article covered the relatively modest hopes of 1X, the Silicon Valley startup hoping to place its Neo humanoid robots in 100 homes by the end of the year. (A story we covered in these pages several months ago in "HUMAN REPLACISM LATEST: ROBOTS PUTTING AWAY GROCERIES AND TAKING OUT TRASH," 25 Feb 2025.)

And therobotreport.com related that car maker Hyundai is set to purchase humanoid robots by the tens of thousands to put to work in its automotive factories. ("Hyundai to buy 'tens of thousands' of Boston Dynamics robots," 4 April 2025.)

It all served as more confirmation that along with agentic AI (ie AI that can autonomously perform tasks in the digital realm, "twin" human skill sets, etc.), tech

companies are hoping “physical AI” humanoid robots hit commercial uptake on a scale that rivals consumer adoption of generative AI that seemingly came out of nowhere in late 2022.

Of course, we have long been tracking and forecasting concerning these “physical AI” ambitions.

We noted the term and its progress in “AI WITH ‘FEELINGS’ > CITIZENS” (26 Mar 2024), where we reported:

> *The demand for “intelligent assistants”—the smarter the better—is already a major driver of competitive edge for tech companies developing AI systems, and that’s not likely to stop.*
>
> *Of course, Tesla Bots and others are competing with Nvidia for that dreamed of mania boom, for physical AI bots on the level of ChatGPT’s sensational uptake in late 2022.*

But we’ve been talking about “AI powered” teslabots and other humanoid tech for much longer than our use of that term.

For example, in “PULL THE PLUG ON TECH POWER OR THE PLUG WILL BE PULLED ON YOU” (24 Aug 2021) we warned that AI powered humanoid robots were being explicitly envisioned by Elon Musk, among others, as tech that would make human work obsolete:

> ***Tesla Bot Wants To Be Your Job Stealing Friend…***
>
> *The [Teslabot] prototype, which sported a human looking body, with a telescreen “face,” is scheduled for commercial production sometime in 2022.*
>
> *Musk made no bones about the endpoint of AI robotics, as he envisions it: a labor takeover that will see people as somehow “freed,” while relying on governments and corporations like Tesla for a basic income.*

> *"In the future, physical labor will be a choice," Musk said at the event, positing that technology his company is developing would likely result in a universal basic income in the future.*

We also forecast that 2025 would be the year of a serious mainstream rollout of humanoid "physical AI" technologies. (See for example "TECHNOCRACY BRIEFS: PRICING TARGETS WHAT YOU CAN PAY, HUMANOIDS GOING MAINSTREAM 2025, AND MAJOR OUTLET CONFIRMS 'MIND-VASION'" 7 Jan 2025 and "THE FUTURE WORLD: MORE ALIEN, OR HUMAN?" 14 Jan 2025.)

Driverless EVs a Money Grab and Green Fantasy That Spells Degrowth

In their discussion, Peter Diamandis and Vinod Khosla also spent time plugging "driverless cars" as a way of easing congestion and combating the supposed "climate crisis."

The vision, proposed by the WEF is very much another technocrat power and money grab seeking to destroy average human travel freedom and ownership, turning the travel system into a rent-a-car public transport where wealthy haves own the car fleets, and relative have nots share "rides" via apps and intermediary technocrats profiting off the whole scheme.

And of course, EVs are the proposed earth-saving "rental" technology, though as we have long reported in these pages, those claims for EVs have been vastly oversold as well. (See for example the many article links in our 2024 Top Trend "EV GO FU.")

Journalist Bjorn Lomborg has also been on the forefront of dissembling false claims regarding EV and other "green" technologies.

His latest article on some of the real environmental and other costs of EVs is well worth the read.

He noted in the Financialpost.com that EVs rely heavily on subsidies, and can't effectively compete otherwise.

Those subsidies warp incentives as the Biden 2022 “Inflation Reduction Act” showed.

Subsidies were disproportionately taken advantage of by relatively wealthy patrons, who bought EVs as virtue-signaling “drive around town” second vehicles.

Working class people who depend on vehicles for cold climates and everyday use and practicality stayed away from EVs in droves—as we had forecast would happen.

Lomborg also emphasized that EVs aren’t as environmentally friendly as commonly claimed and perceived. While they don't produce CO2 while driving, their manufacturing—particularly battery production—generates significant emissions.

And where electric grid systems rely significantly on coal, Lomborg noted that reports suggest EVs may contribute to more CO2 emissions than hydrocarbon (ie. gas) vehicles.

Other impacts? The increased weight of EVs leads to more road wear, particulate pollution including microplastics etc, and safety concerns surrounding the intense fires that can result from lithium batteries.

In addition to all that, we have noted that EVs are very costly to repair, even from minor accidents, compared to hydrocarbon vehicles, and battery life and other components add to exorbitant costs often after 100 thousand miles or less of use.

And lack of infrastructure and technology limitations involving charging and other aspects of EVs, make them even more impractical.

Lomborg’s latest piece concluded what we have long said regarding EVs: they will not see willing uptake until and unless the technology can approach what efficient gas powered cars and infrastructure offer.

And we add that if they are mandated and forced despite inferior and impractical technological aspects, they will be a Degrowth drag, wherever they are imposed.

AGI is Here?

Has Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) arrived with the latest experimental version of ChatGPT, version 5?

Gary Marcus, technocrat entrepreneur and professor emeritus of psychology and neural science at NYU, thinks so.

He posted on X on 1 April:

> *Breaking GPT-5 News!*
>
> *To my amazement, I just came back from a trip to Europe only to find an invite to a private GPT-5 demo, and I tried it. This thing is lit.*
>
> *Fully multimodal, and in hours of playing it with I didn't see a single boneheaded error, not one hallucination. If this is not AGI, I don't know what is.*
>
> *My hat is off to Sam and the gang! (Great to see all the neurosymbolic components, too, which have clearly helped with intepretability, reliability, and alignment.)*
>
> *I'll be retiring, now that AGI has been achieved, admittedly several years sooner than I expected.*
>
> *Please use it wisely, everyone!*

That assessment comes on the heels of a recent statement by the The Future of Life Institute, counseling governments and corporations to institute kill switches and other safeguards to disable advanced AI systems if they go rogue, and to protect human workers. (“Recommendations for the U.S. AI Action Plan - Future of Life Institute,” 14 Mar 2025.)

The statement did not advocate against an outright ban on the pursuit of AGI and ASI (Artificial Super Intelligence), which has long been our recommendation in these pages of **The Trends Journal**.

But it did propose a number of sensible measures, including:

> *1. Protect the presidency from power loss to an out-of-control AI or rival authority.*
>
> > *1.1 Issue a moratorium on developing future AI systems with the potential to escape human control, including those with self-improvement and self-replication capabilities.*
> >
> > *1.2 Ensure the US government understands and has visibility into superintelligent AI systems.*
> >
> > *1.3 Mandate installation of an off-switch for all advanced AI systems.*
> >
> > *1.4 Require antitrust law enforcement agencies at the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to engage in robust oversight and enforcement to prevent power concentration as well as market consolidation of AI development under a small handful of tech monopolies.*
>
> *2. Foster human flourishing from AI by promoting the development of AI systems free from ideological agendas.*
>
> > *2.1 Ban AI models that can engage in superhuman persuasion and manipulation.*
> >
> > *2.2 Require the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the AI & Crypto Czar to have close engagement with the White House Faith Office and all religious communities to inform the governance of AI.*
>
> *3. Protect American workers from job loss and replacement.*

3.1 Task the Secretary of Labor with tracking AI's potential to replace workers, including a breakdown of the impact across different states.

4. End the free giveaway of U.S. frontier AI technology to adversaries.

5. Condition privileged energy grid access for AI companies on verifiable security measures to prevent foreign theft.

6. Establish an AI industry whistleblower program to incentivize AI development that is free from ideological bias or engineered social agendas and promotes national security.

6.1 Direct the AI Czar to coordinate with Congress to establish an AI-specific whistleblower program to report dangerous signs of AI control loss or negligent practices that threaten the American people and strengthen our adversaries.

As a reminder, we called in these pages for a pause and limits on the development of AGI and ASI level AI systems well before The Future of Life Institute made similar calls.

For more on that, see "AUTOMATING OUT OF WORLD CRISIS?" (12 Jul 2022), and also "AN AI PAUSE WON'T CUT IT: REJECT SCIENTISM OR BRACE FOR A POST HUMAN FUTURE" (23 Apr 2023).

Newsweek Now Suggesting Ways to Boost U.S. Birth Rates

As humanoid robots are ready to explode into commercial and home usage, actual human populations in the U.S. and around the world are at dangerous demographic inflection points.

Once a nation—like say, Italy or Japan—falls substantially under the replacement birth rate of about 2.1 children on average per woman, reversing the trend becomes very difficult.

A *Newsweek* story this past week made it clear that the U.S. which had long managed to stay ahead of Europe in terms of birthrate levels, was now facing a similar future demographic crisis fate. ("Doctor Suggests Pregnancy Changes To Solve US Birth Rate Panic," 5 Apr 2025.)

The article detailed recommendations of Dr. Jonathan Sher of Scotland's Coalition for Healthier Pregnancies, Better Lives.

Sher noted that 1 in 4 pregnancies of American women result in "unhappy endings," and said that could be improved with more aggressive health interventions and care:

> *"Many of these unwelcome outcomes could, and should, have been prevented through robust, universal, effective policies and practices under the umbrella of preconception and interconception health, education and care."*

The article also outlined that demographic decline is happening in many countries and regions around the world, as we have detailed, including in our 2025 Top Trend "WELCOME TO FOREVERLAND" (2 Jan 2025).

We contemplated in that forecast the odd juxtaposition of growing interest in tech fueled ambitions of wealthy elites for life extension solutions, even as human populations have increasingly faced the prospect of demographic implosion.

Gene Editing Humans

The idea that humans are just "organic" robots, and should be subject to modifications, "upgrades" and indeed, wholesale redesigns via genetic technologies, is commonplace among those who are on the research and practical forefronts of this technology.

In other words, they are almost uniformly transhumanist in their ideology, goals, and sense of unbound experimentation.

Marcus Arrut, CEO at RenovaCode Therapeutics, recently expressed what many cutting edge geneticists believe and aspire to, concerning radically remaking humans via gene editing.

Arrut, whose X byline proclaims he is for "Revolutionizing Longevity Technologies in the World. Advocate of Peace, Order and Progress," posted on X on 31 March:

> *Marcos Arrut*
> *@MarcosArrut*
>
> *Genetic engineering is the key to endless life.*
> *Modifying DNA will allow us to redefine what it means to be human.*
>
> *That's all.*

The faux understatement of ambition in "That's all," as well as the warped grandiosity of statements like "redefine what it means to be human" and "genetic engineering is the key to endless life," shouldn't just be soberly considered by sensible people.

These, combined with the practical pursuits of gentech companies, should provide more than enough alarm bells to draw increased scrutiny from regulators and political leaders.

Genetic "entrepreneurs" are already introducing profit-minded redesigns of natural organics, be it food crops, animals and even humans, right now, as we have been laying out for years, including in our 2024 Top Trend, "THE SYNTHETIC DEVOLUTION" (2 Jan 2024).

And gene editing, as we've noted, has managed to avoid traditional safety testing requirements, by claiming its processes are no different in result than genetic selection which occurs in nature, or via traditional animal and plant husbandry.

But that claim couldn't be more false.

Natural selection involves complex natural processes, and traditional cross breeding and selecting plants for traits, etc., has inherent technical limitations that are obliterated by sophisticated gene editing systems like CRISPR.

CRSPR "redesigns" planned and conducted by human researchers—increasingly guided by AI—leverage technological capabilities and precision, along with a complete absence of complex natural environment factors, that has characterized genetic variation previous to these genetic manipulation technologies.

For more on all this, see our previous articles "SYNTHETIC FOOD, SYNTHETIC SAFETY" (5 Dec 2023) and "THE SYNTHETIC DEVOLUTION" (2 Jan 2024).

In these pages, we have long warned how technocrats have embarked on a premeditated campaign to cast synthetic products, activities and social systems as superior to natural alternatives.

A "Synthetic Sell" has substantially inverted the natural organic foods, holistic natural health and other natural lifestyle trends that grew and became mainstream in the latter 20th century, into the early 2000s.

The barrage of "technical innovations" in bought and paid legacy media intimately tied to self-interested tech companies, pushes relentlessly propaganda selling synthetic superiority.

It is becoming ingrained in average people to consider synthetically designed foods, products and even experiences as superior to natural alternatives.

We have detailed these intentions and strategies in articles such as:

- "METAWORLD" (30 Nov 2021)
- "GENETIC MODIFICATIONS BEING PREPPED TO 'SOLVE' EVERYTHING" (18 Jan 2022)
- "SELLING THE SYNTHETIC UNREAL" (12 Apr 2022)
- "SYN CENTURY: HOW SCIENTISM MEDIATES EVERY ASPECT OF MODERN EXPERIENCE" (5 Dec 2023)

- 2024 Top Trend "THE SYNTHETIC DEVOLUTION" (2 Jan 2024)
- "AGAINST NATURE: PROFITING FROM THE SYNTHETIC DEVOLUTION" (9 Apr 2024)

The Synthetic Sell of Humanness Itself

A central tenet of transhumanists actively working in fields like AI, genetics, biotech longevity, etc., is that humanness itself is an infinitely malleable construct, not definable or enduring beings worthy of any special dignity or preservation.

Consider a recent comment by X account Rand, who posted on 3 April:

> *we need to redefine what [it] means to be human*
>
> *our purpose in life should not be a job*

And account named Matrix Reaper chimed in:

> *Completely agree.*
>
> *A job is a function.*
>
> *But being human is a *framework*—*
> *for curiosity, creation, connection, recursion.*
>
> *We are more than the task.*

To which Rand responded:

> *hopefully we can find out true meaning, if there is any at all*

Ah, meaning.

Indeed, what does it mean to be human?

Are we that which can redesign and remake ourselves via technology…premeditated, self-conscious and self-actuated "evolution" of the universe itself?

Or are we meant to experience, inhabit and fulfill elevated natural potentials already existent and inherent within us, without attempting to destroy or deform those qualities, in pursuit of something "better," beyond them?

We've been addressing some of these fundamental questions since this section of **The Trends Journal** debuted in 2021. See for example, our touchstone articles "THE 'PROGRESS' OF LEAVING HUMANS BEHIND" (1 Jun 2021) and "SINGULARITY UNIVERSITY: FUELING AI ASCENDANCE" (3 Aug 2021).

As we contemplated more recently in "KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING: A MEDITATION FOR THE SEASON" (17 Dec 2024) and "THE FUTURE WORLD: MORE ALIEN, OR HUMAN?" (14 Jan 2025), humans are meant to move, and to think. Obsoleting those things on the premise of alien physical AI relieving us of such chores, and going down the path of trying to remain relevant via gene-edited "improvements," are part and parcel of the siren song of transhumanism that would obliterate natural humanity.

Conclusion

In answer to Diamandis concerning the imminent age of "physical AI" humanoid robots everywhere, I wrote:

> *20th century: Tech gave us diseases of "affluence", uncoupling varied physical labors from reward. 21st century: AI is atrophying our minds.*
>
> *Humans are meant to labor and think. So screw your money-sucking AI / robot replacement, transhumanist.*

Diamandis has spent his life investing and profiting off spurring transhumanist ideology and practical technologies to achieve it.

His grandiose ambitions, like those of his mentor and "Singularity University" co-founder Ray Kurzeil, are hard to overstate.

Latest example?

This past week found him on X posting about the possibility of technology enabling him to play Ironman:

> *I had to ask*
> *@PalmerLuckey*
> *if there's an Iron man suit coming soon. His answer? "Maybe-ish." I'll take it.*

It echoed perfectly our previous contemplation in these pages regarding the ambitions of Diamandis and others, "WILL AI BE JARVIS, OR SYNTHETIC TONY STARK?" (12 Mar 2024).

But he's not and never will be a tech-powered superhero, just a predatory entrepreneurial transhumanist.

There likely will be robot super soldiers in the near future. But they won't require soft organic muscled creatures with relatively glacial decision-making and critical-thinking skills to navigate battlefields and lethal missions.

The fallacy of Ironman was that his "Jarvis" AI sidekick somehow needed the quick-witted and brilliant (and physically compromised with a heart condition) human technocrat entrepreneur, Tony Stark.

Physical AI's won't need squishy human innards.

Not to guide them, control them, or collaborate with them.

Not when they can outdo and outperform humans in every respect, which is, by the way, the definition of the "Singularity."

COVID CAME FROM WUHAN LAB, FRENCH ACADEMY OF MEDICINE (UNBOLDLY) DECLARES

A genetic “gain-of-function” manipulated “COVID-19” virus—a bioweapon, whether intended as one, or not—wounded and changed the world in 2020.

That’s no longer a conspiracy, but a consensus likelihood, according to The French Academy of Medicine.

They recently voted 97 percent in favor of the view that SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus dubbed COVID-19, came from a Wuhan china biolab “error.”

Dr. Richard Ebright of Rutgers University, a longtime critic of experimental gain-of-function virus research that he helped point out was occurring at that lab, and connected with U.S. researchers and funding under the authority of the National Institute of Health (NIH), posted that news on X on 2 April.

Ebright wrote:

> *“97% of the Academy of Medicine voted almost unanimously to say that we believe that SARS-CoV-2 originated from a laboratory error and that lessons must be learned from it to take precautions in the future,” revealed Professor Jean-François Delfraissy in a press conference of the Academy of Medicine on April 2, 2025.*
>
> *“It is true that as a virologist, I do not see many arguments in favor of the natural emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus,” adds Professor Christine Rouzioux, virologist at Necker Hospital (Paris). In a new report that these experts co-signed with others, the Academy of Medicine draws on the assessment of known elements on the origins of the Covid-19 virus to recommend a significant*

improvement in the monitoring of the emergence of zoonoses, and especially greater safety of biological manipulations in the laboratory.

"'The French Academy of Medicine voted almost unanimously–97% to 3%–to say we believe SARS-CoV-2 originated from a lab error and precautions must be taken in the future,' revealed Professor Jean-François Delfraissy in a press conference April 2, 2025." https://t.co/nxG3Oz2MT7

— Richard H. Ebright (@R_H_Ebright) April 2, 2025

A Disaster of "Progress"

It wasn't just spread of the virus itself that precipitated devastation of course, but the draconian technocratic overreactions of governments and societies swept up by fear and power-grab mandates to "stop the spread."

Indeed, the premise that submitting to the dictates of a scientifically expert technocratic class overseers was the model for social progress and mitigating disasters and upheavals, saw a devastating reckoning with The COVID War.

Technocrats including Bill Gates managed to thoroughly gameplan how a worldwide virus calamity would unfold, just before a real one was unleashed on the world. (See "EVENT 201: THE COVID-19 BLUEPRINT," 23 Mar 2021.)

That simulation, surprise surprise, predicted that only a science produced vaccine would eventually end a global pandemic that would kill a projected 65 million people.

Of course, COVID happened within a year of that Event 201 simulation.

And just like in the simulation, real world science came up with a crowning science solution: the warp speed mRNA / DNA gene level treatments propagandized as "vaccines," pushed on billions of humans—and to be fair, worshipped as life-saving technology by many.

The oversold claims for efficacy, the lies and cover-ups concerning adverse and side effects, the mega billions in profit sucked up by Big Pharma drug lords, all eventually became undeniable aspects of the sordid real-life story.

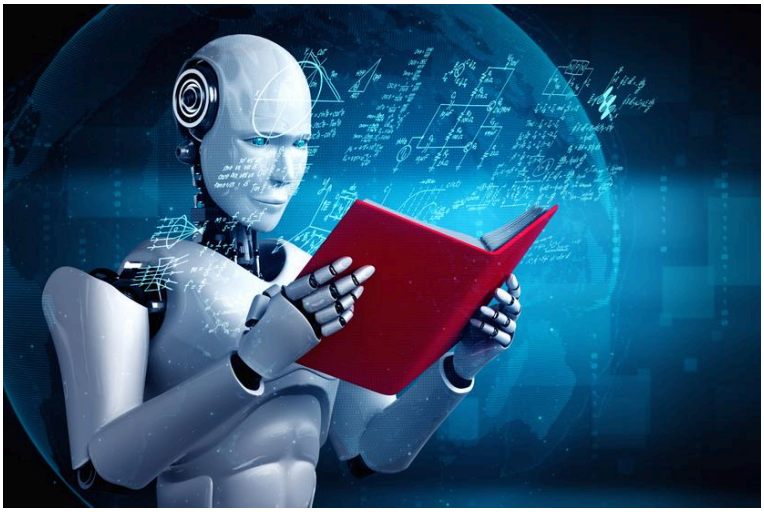
And concerning it all, perhaps no single publication in the world covered and forecast as presciently as **The Trends Journal**.

In short, the recent determination by The French Academy of Medicine unfortunately represents a face-saving gesture, rather than a bold stand on behalf of truth at this point.

That ship sailed years ago.

And longtime readers of this magazine know who and who was not aboard.

TECHNOCRACY BRIEFS: EV GO FU STUNS WASHINGTON POST, AND MORE EVIDENCE AI COPYRIGHT THEFT



It's not a good time for EV manufacturing, including battery makers. MSM continues to be surprised, but **Trends Journal** readers certainly aren't.

Meanwhile, damning evidence concerning wholesale AI tech company theft of copyrighted content to create their AI system capabilities.

And it's something we identified as the poisoned fruit of generative AI, well before most others understood what enabled the compensation-diverting "magic."

For more, read on…

EV GO FU WAS UNDERWAY BEFORE TRUMP

Even before Donald Trump was elected, Biden mega-billion Inflation Reduction Act spending (supposedly) meant to spur green energy technology development and uptake was failing.

That admission could be found within a *Washington Post* story that focused on EV industry related problems.

The article noted right in the lede that failed EV vehicle, component and other "green" technology startups predated Trump's election and pivot to what we have termed "energy realism."

The *Post* article noted:

> *Drawing on cash and tax credits from the [Biden] Inflation Reduction Act, these factories promised to provide jobs—largely in Republican areas—and to set the nation on a path to making homegrown EVs.*
>
> *But even before President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on imports, many of those projects were being canceled—leaving thousands of jobs and the shift to clean energy in doubt.*
> *("A stunning number of electric vehicle, battery factories are being canceled," 4 Apr 2025.)*

In contrast to the *WP* and most other legacy media, we had forecast in these pages that the Inflation Reduction Act would likely go over like a lead balloon concerning its objectives, even before, and certainly in the months and years after its passage.

Indeed, we chronicled so many facets of EV and other green tech inadequacies, perverted incentives, and grifting and boondoggles, that we eventually called a 2024 Top Trend "EV GO FU," and followed up with "GREEN TRANSITION F U TOO?" (6 Aug 2024) and our 2025 Top Trend "GEN AI KILLED THE CLIMATE CHANGE STAR" (2 Jan 2025).

For more related reading, see "POLLUTED MOTIVES: THE LATEST IN GREEN ENERGY 'SYNTHETIC SELLS' AND ABSURDITIES" (1 Apr 2025) and "CLIMATE KA-CHING: FRAUD AND WASTE OF THE 2022 INFLATION REDUCTION ACT NOW SUBJECT OF LAWSUIT" (1 Apr 2025).

NEW STUDY: COPYRIGHTED CONTENT WAS "MEMORIZED" BY GEN AI

A new study has shown evidence that OpenAI—despite their equivocations in those heady days of early 2023, when ChatGPT3 was exploding into popular public consciousness and uptake—heavily exploited copyrighted content to create their generative AI system.

The University of Washington, University of Copenhagen, and Stanford researchers used a novel way for detecting training data "memorized" by models like OpenAI's leading chatbot.

Some generative AI model outputs are de facto copies of training data, and image and language models have been shown to substantially copy movie screenshots, TV characters and scenarios, news articles, etc., as we have long reported and were among the first to point out. See for example:

- "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART TWO" (1 Nov 2022); where we pointed "a fairly typical propensity of AI to throw up gobbledegook scraped by its neural networks from internet content";
- "CREATIVE CONTENT INFRINGEMENT OF DEEP LEARNING AI HAS MONUMENTAL IMPLICATIONS" (7 Feb 2023)
- "WOKE ETHICS WON'T SAVE US FROM THE SINGULARITY" (21 Feb 2023)
- "OPENAI FINALLY BEGINS PAYING FOR IP—BUT IT'S ONLY A DROP IN AN OCEAN OF PROBLEMS" (19 Dec 2023)

According to the new study abstract, posted at arxiv.og:

> *"In this work, we demonstrate a new method to identify training data known to proprietary LLMs like GPT-4 without requiring any access to model weights or token probabilities, by using information-guided probes. Our work builds on a key observation: text passages with high surprisal are good search material for memorization probes. By evaluating a model's ability to successfully reconstruct high-surprisal tokens in text, we can identify a surprising number of texts memorized by LLMs."*
> *("Information-Guided Identification of Training Data Imprint in (Proprietary) Large Language Models," 15 Mar 2025.)*

In these pages, we were among the earliest to forecast that the copyright theft and diversion of compensation from creatives to AI companies via "magic" generative AI money machines was underway. See for example "CREATIVE CONTENT INFRINGEMENT OF DEEP LEARNING AI HAS MONUMENTAL IMPLICATIONS" (7 Feb 2023).

We also countered the connection that these AI systems learned in a way analogous to humans, and thus should be treated in the same ways that humans are under current "fair use" and other copyright and IP laws. (See "FALSE EQUIVALENCE: CHATGPT DOESN'T LEARN CONTENT LIKE HUMANS, AND CRIES OUT FOR NEW IP LAWS," 21 Mar 2023.)

As an aside concerning the hypocrisy of these companies, Google and Meta (parent company of Facebook and Instagram), are among the most stringent in disallowing or hijacking "fair use" connected content by creatives on platforms like Youtube and elsewhere.

A simple video taken on a public street or party where music is playing in the background, is often subject to being demonetized, or having Youtube divert monetization of the video to Music Rights companies like ASCAP and BMI.

OpenAI, Meta, Google and other AI tech companies are all currently being sued by writers, programmers, and other rights-holders for utilizing their books, codebases, and other works to construct its models without permission.

But as we've long noted, the theft goes beyond just formal groups and companies with pockets deep enough to mount these suits.

Indeed, all humanity, and our collective knowledge and contributions, including privileged data, social media posts, websites, etc. have been thoroughly scraped and fed to generative AI systems.

And as we warned in "WHEN AI LEARNS YOU, WHO OWNS 'YOU?' (HINT: NOT YOU)" (3 Dec 2024), agentic AI being rolled out by businesses are now threatening to copy and digitally twin the skill sets and professional knowledge of human workers, in order to "assist"—and very possibly take over jobs, or portions of jobs.

Detrimental Fallout for Humans Hard to Overstate

The authors of the study observed that “High-quality training data has proven crucial for developing performant large language models (LLMs). However, commercial LLM providers disclose few, if any, details about the data used for training.”

That is certainly true. But it doesn’t exempt these companies from having to negotiate with content creatives, copyright and IP holders, etc., for mutually agreed compensation or participation in the revenues of AI systems.

Anything else is a recipe for human creator disaster, and would be a huge disincentive for humans to acquire advanced skills and labor to create works across a wide swathe of fields.

Not only is that already happening, but as we forecasted in “GENERATION AI: AI LAYING WASTE TO JOBS, AS WE PREDICTED” (24 Oct 2023), well before studies substantiated our forecasting, reliance on generative AI is atrophying and eroding human high level skills including critical thinking abilities.

SEC LAYS OUT STABLECOINS NOT CLASSED AS SECURITIES

Fiat-backed stablecoins backed by the dollar 1:1, are not securities, according to a ruling and guidelines issued this past week by the SEC.

It's another step in changes and regulatory clarity that may further deploy stablecoins, including U.S. bank issued tokens, as a way to bolster U.S. dollar use in a time when de-dollarization has become a threat to long term U.S. dollar reserve currency status.

The SEC's Division of Corporation Finance released the strategy for dollar-backed digital assets on 4 April. ("Statement on Stablecoins," 4 Apr 2025.)

Their guideline said that "Covered Stablecoins" are exempt from the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, relieving issuers of regulations that a "securities" designation would've imposed.

It laid out that Covered Stablecoins must be:

1. backed by liquid, low-risk reserves like cash or short term U.S. Treasury bills
2. segregated from corporate money, and
3. protected from third-party claims

The SEC stressed that these assets are not securities since their economic reality does not justify their classification, as reported by Coin360.com and others. ("SEC Says Fiat Stablecoins Aren't Securities," 5 Apr 2025.)

The SEC noted that this mechanism is a payment tool system functioning as a stabilizer, not for speculative purposes. The Commission noted that stablecoin holders do not receive interest or reserve asset returns, which are kept by the issuing organization.

Looking Deeper Into the SEC Guideline

A fundamental judgement of the SEC guideline was that stablecoins which adhered to its stipulations were not designed to raise capital via promising some benefit, but instead to facilitate payments in a digital realm.

In that regard, it said:

> *Covered Stablecoins are marketed solely for use in commerce, as a means of making payments, transmitting money, and/or storing value, and not as investments. Marketers sometimes highlight that Covered Stablecoins provide a stable, quick, dependable, and accessible means of making payments, transmitting money, and/or storing value. Marketers also may liken Covered Stablecoins to a "digital dollar." Marketers also sometimes state that a Covered Stablecoin:*
>
> - *is designed to have a stable value relative or corresponding to USD (e.g., one Covered Stablecoin to one USD);*

- *does not entitle a Covered Stablecoin holder to the right to receive any interest, profit, or other returns;*

- *does not reflect any investment or other ownership interest in the Covered Stablecoin issuer or any other third party;*

- *does not afford a Covered Stablecoin holder any governance rights with respect to the Covered Stablecoin issuer or the Covered Stablecoin; and/or*

- *does not provide a Covered Stablecoin holder with any financial benefit or loss based on the Covered Stablecoin issuer or any third party's financial performance.*

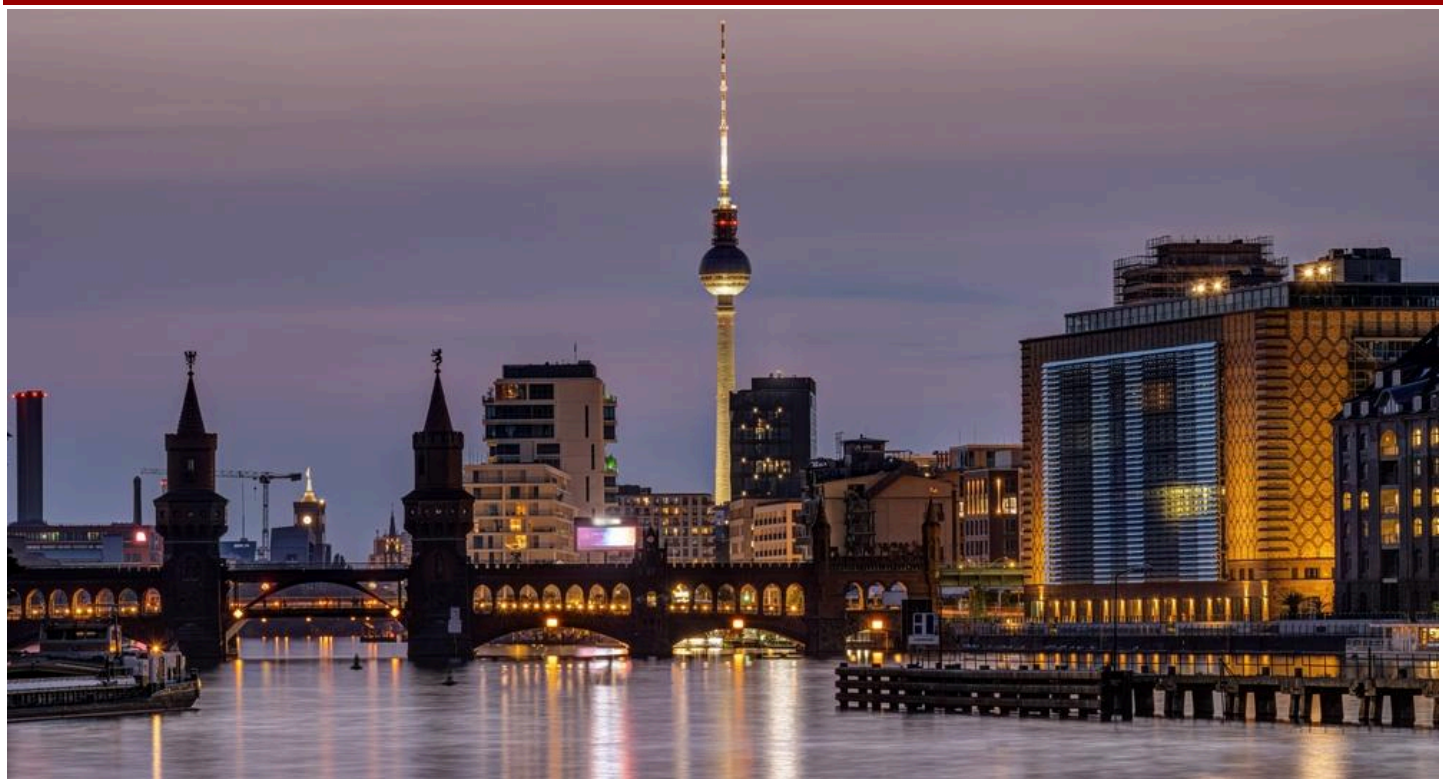
As discussed below, we believe that marketing Covered Stablecoins in these ways are indicia that Covered Stablecoins are not offered or sold as securities.

TRENDPOST: *We have long forecast and reported on the possibility of stablecoins being an alternative to a government CBDC, and a way to bolster the U.S. dollar, while allowing flexibility and competition in the digital assets space.*

Legislation permitting U.S. banks to issue stablecoins that adhere to the latest SEC guidelines, is a likely next step.

For related reading, see:

- *"COULD STABLECOINS SAVE THE DOLLAR?" (9 Aug 2022)*
- *"UPDATE: CAN STABLECOINS SAVE THE DOLLAR?" (16 Aug 2022)*
- *"SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL: THE CORE POWER OF CBDC'S" (30 Jul 2024); where we noted stablecoins provided positives of digital dollar pegged tokens without the centralization and surveillance abuses that would almost certainly be built into a U.S. CBDC.*



MERZ ALLY: GERMANS WHO AREN'T AFRAID OF RUSSIAN THREAT ARE IN 'DENIAL'

The German politician in the running to replace the country's professional warmongering freak foreign minister, Annalena Barbock, looks prepared to intensify Berlin's march to war and said anyone in the country who does not recognize the Russian threat is in denial.

Johann Wadephul, a German MP who has backed mandatory conscription, addressed a crowd at the Center for Liberal Modernity, and called Moscow the most "acute threat" to Europe and said it is "very difficult, even in my party, but also with the general public, for people to come to the conclusion that Russia is so aggressive, so dangerous, and such a threat to civilization and all of us here," according to the *Financial Times.*

He told the think tank that the denial is not limited to Germany—but all of Europe.

Friedrich Merz, Germany's chancellor-in-waiting, has been running around selling the threat of war with Russia as to why Berlin needs to open its checkbook and take on new debt to fortify its military to meet what he sees as the demand. (See "GERMANY'S PARLIAMENT ENDORSES MERZ'S €1-TRILLION STIMULUS PLAN" 25 Mar 2025, "RECESSIONARY GERMANY TO BREAK OPEN THE PIGGY BANK TO PREPARE FOR WAR WITH RUSSIA, TRY TO BOOST FLAGGING ECONOMY" 25 Mar 2025, "AMID RECESSION, GERMANY SPENDS BIG ON MILITARY, INFRASTRUCTURE" 11 Mar 2025 and "GERMANY'S CHANCELLOR-IN-WAITING AIMS TO PUMP UP MILITARY SPENDING" 4 Mar 2025.)

Merz is set to replace Olaf Scholz, who has been a Russia hawk who once called peace protesters "fallen angels from hell."

Scholz's support for Ukraine was one of the reasons that his government dissolved in December.

Establishment politicians watched the surge in popularity for the country's top "far-right" political party—the Alternative for Germany, or AfD—that became the country's second-most powerful political party after this year's election. (Euronews noted that there has been overall disapproval of the way that Merz's Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union have negotiated forming a coalition government. An Insa poll from *Bild,* released on Sunday, found that the alliance has 24 percent approval—tied with the AfD.)

"There's no way around the AfD anymore," Alice Weidel, AfD co-chair, wrote on X.

She said Germans "don't want another left-wing government in which the CDU/CSU lets the SPD and Greens dictate their policies." She said there needs to be a "true, bourgeois political shift."

TRENDPOST: *As Gerald Celente has long noted, "When all else fails, they take you to war." Germany is preparing for war. Europe's largest economy, and now the world's*

third largest, sank into recession in 2023 when its economy shrank by 0.3 percent and fell 0.2 percent in 2024. And now it is facing a third year of decline.

Despite this, as we have detailed, Germany will spend an estimated trillion euros to build up its military and some of the money will go to rebuilding its infrastructure.

Last week, Berlin announced that it will deploy troops to Lithuania for the first time since WWII.

One commander told Newsweek: "We have a clear mission. We have to ensure the protection, freedom and security of our Lithuanian allies here on NATO's eastern flank."

Merz wasted no time after his election to talk about life in Europe with the U.S. attempting rapprochement with Russia.

"It is my absolute priority to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible so that we can actually become independent from the U.S. step by step," he said.

Merz got Germany's lower house—the Bundestag—and its upper house—the Bundesrat—to rush a vote in favor of a bill that could open up the €1 trillion in military spending that may have otherwise been blocked by the new parliament.

What is not mentioned is that this is the Germany that launched operation Barbarossa during WWII and killed over 25 million Russians. And now they are playing the bullshit Domino Theory game that if they don't get ready to fight Russian, Moscow will launch a war against Europe and invade their nations to steal their land.

U.K. WANTS MULTILATERAL FUND IN EUROPE TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT

The United Kingdom is trying to sell a proposal that would get a "coalition of the willing" European countries to develop a "supranational institution" that will allow members to purchase weapons quickly and for a significant discount as these allies look to beef up their militaries without breaking the bank.

The *Financial Times* reported that it was privy to an informal paper—penned by the U.K. Treasury—that laid out the proposal that called for the formation of a "supranational institution" that could purchase weapons at favorable rates and backed by sovereign guarantees and equity.

The U.K. did not confirm the existence of such a paper. The *FT* said the "non-paper" was circulated around European leadership.

The Trends Journal has reported extensively on how Europe is militarizing amid what it sees as a growing threat from Russia and inconsistency from Washington. There is a sense in the EU that these countries will need to invest more in their militaries to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on the U.S. for security. (See "U.K. LOOKS TO BEEF UP ITS MILITARY AT THE EXPENSE OF ITS PUBLIC" 1 Apr 2025, "A RE-MILITARIZING EUROPE LOSES ITS 'PEACE DIVIDEND'" 25 Mar 2025, "ASIAN DEFENSE COMPANIES SEE WINDFALL FROM EUROPE'S MILITARIZATION" 25 Mar 2025 and "MACRON GOES NUCLEAR: SAYS HE'D PROVIDE FRANCE'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT FOR EUROPEAN ALLIES AMID THREAT FROM RUSSIA" 11 Mar 2025.)

The *FT's* report said that despite new funding and loan programs, there is still a financing gap in Europe worth "hundreds of billions of euros." This proposal could help close the gap, the paper said.

The U.K.'s plan would mean these countries have a common stockpile and only pay for the equipment when used, according to *The Daily Mail.* One of the main perks is that governments would not be forced to pay upfront for these weapons.

The paper noted that the document's contents "do not represent the official position of the British government."

TRENDPOST: *The Daily Mail noted that some European officials expressed concerns that the proposal could take too long to implement.*

Calvin Bailey, a Labour MP who sits on the Defense Select Committee, told The Daily Mail that there is an urgent security situation in Europe and there's a need for a "structured, long-term mechanism that ensures that re-armament is not only faster but also more financially efficient than going at it alone. This is a positive and proactive step to reach out to our European allies and support British industry."

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced last month that London will increase its defense spending by 0.2 percent to 2.5 percent of its GDP, or about $17 billion, citing what he sees as the growing threat from Russia.

"By spending more on defense, we will deliver the stability that underpins economic growth and will unlock prosperity through new jobs, skills and opportunity across the country," he said. (See "U.K., EUROPE AIMS TO INCREASE MILITARY SPENDING AS TRUMP LOOKS TO END WAR IN UKRAINE," 4 Mar 2025.)

European countries have felt pressure from the Trump administration to increase their military spending. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said these countries should look to spend about 5 percent of their GDPs on their militaries. (The Associated Press noted that 1/3 do not meet NATO's 2 percent threshold.)

The AP report said the U.S. spent about 3.38 percent of its GDP on the military last year. When Rubio was asked by a reporter if Washington will increase its spending to 5 percent, he said, "Sure. We're heading there now."

U.S. SENDS MILITARY ASSETS TO IRAN'S DOORSTEP

The United States military is rushing to send assets into the Middle East to bolster its forces amid its airstrike campaign on the Houthis and increased tensions with Iran over its nuclear program and support of the Yemeni group.

A U.S. official told *The Wall Street Journal* that the buildup is not part of any plans for a looming strike on Iran. Two other officials told the paper that the move is to provide increased support as the U.S. bombs Yemen.

A paper said the additional assets include Predator drones, B-2 bombers, and fifth-generation F-35s. Reports said the U.S. is also planning to reposition Patriot missile defense batteries from Asia to the Middle East.

The paper also noted that there will soon be two carrier groups in the region—the USS Harry S. Truman, which is bombing Yemen now, and the USS Carl Vinson, which has been in Asia. (See "U.S. POSITIONS ITS TOP BOMBERS ON DIEGO GARCIA—GIVING THEM QUICK ACCESS TO IRAN, YEMEN," 1 Apr 2025.)

Sean Parnell, the Pentagon spokesman, said, "The United States and its partners…are prepared to respond to any state or non-state actor seeking to broaden or escalate conflict in the region," according to the paper.

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in March ordered the USS Carl Vinson to the Middle East while keeping the Truman there for another month, officials told the Associated Press. The Carl Vinson will extend its deployment by three months.

President Donald Trump has tried to present his administration as one that will lead "through strength," and has tried to portray the Biden administration as impotent when it came to threats in the Middle East.

Trump has done his best to portray the Houthis as a band of terrorists seeking only to inflict pain on the West through attacks on merchant vessels.

Trump said the U.S. is hitting the Houthis every night "harder and harder."

He continued, "Our attacks will continue until they are no longer a threat to Freedom of Navigation."

He said the Houthis can either stop shooting at U.S. ships, or the pain has just begun for them and "their sponsors in Iran."

It has been widely documented that Trump sees the Houthis as an Iranian proxy and wants to send a message to Tehran about what's in store if it does not jettison its nuclear program. The Iranians have accused the White House of bullying and said it has no interest in developing a bomb—unless pushed.

Ali Larijani, an adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Tehran does not want a war with the U.S. but it could get to the point where it has no choice.

“If, at some point, you (the U.S.) move towards bombing by yourself or through Israel, you will force Iran to make a different decision,” he said. He continued, “We are not moving towards (nuclear) weapons, but if you do something wrong in the Iranian nuclear issue, you will force Iran to move towards that because it has to defend itself.”

TRENDPOST: *It is not ancient history that then-candidate Trump called out Joe Biden for suggesting that Israel avoids striking Iran’s nuclear facilities because of the potential of dramatic Iranian response. (See “IRAN CALLS TRUMP’S BOMBING THREAT A ‘SHOCKING AFFRONT’ TO PEACE, VOWS TO RESPOND TO ANY STRIKES,” 1 Apr 2025.)*

“I think [Biden] got that wrong. Isn't that what you're supposed to hit? The answer should have been to hit the nuclear first and worry about the rest later,” Trump said at the time.

Trump said last month that “very bad things are going to happen” to Iran, if it doesn’t fold on the nuclear deal. He told NBC: “There will be bombing. If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing. It will be bombing the likes of which they have never seen before.”

Dennis Kucinich, who ran for Congress in Ohio last year but lost the race, noted on his Substack that Trump violated international law by making such a comment.

“Official threats against another state are a violation of the UN Charter, Article Two, Section 4, which prohibits ‘the threat or use of force against …. any state.’ Both Iran and the US signed and ratified that agreement nearly 80 years ago, in recognition of its organizing principle: ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war…’”

TREND FORECAST: *As we have greatly detailed over the decades, Iran, a nation of some 91 million people, is very advanced scientifically, technologically and militarily. Should the United States—who has not won a major war since WWII and could not even beat the Afghans in what was the longest war in American history—and Israel (a nation of 7 million Jewish people) go to war against Iran, they will both be defeated.*

And as Israel has warned, if they know they will lose against Iran they will employ their Samson Option... which means they will go nuclear. This will be the official beginning of WWIII and the beginning of the end of life on Earth.

U.S. STRIKES ON HOUTHIS INEFFECTIVE AND EXPENSIVE

The U.S. last week continued its punishment campaign against Yemen over the Houthi defense of Gazans amid the Israeli genocide and one of the targets was a water management building and infrastructure in Hodeidah, the large port city, that cut off water to about 50,000 residents.

AntiWar.com reported that the U.S. carried out 15 additional strikes in Saada, which is Yemen's northwest. The strikes—which killed at least one—prompted the Houthis to launch their own attacks on U.S. warships in the Red Sea, according to a statement from the group.

The Trump administration has described the Houthis as an Iranian-backed militia who—for the sake of terrorizing the West and unprovoked—decided to begin attacking merchant vessels in the Red Sea. The group has said there will be no business as usual as long as Gazans are being starved to death and massacred by the IDF.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he will annihilate the group, and told Iran that he would hold Tehran responsible for any further Houthi aggression. (See "TRUMP VOWS TO 'COMPLETELY ANNIHILATE' HOUTHIS AFTER VOWING NOT TO GET U.S. ENSNARED IN ANOTHER WAR" 25 Mar 2025, "TRUMP WARNS IRAN THAT HE WILL HOLD IT RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY SHOT FIRED BY THE HOUTHIS" 18 Mar 2025 and "U.S. INTENSIFIES ATTACKS ON THE HOUTHIS FOR DEFENDING GAZANS" 7 Jan 2025.)

Reports have emerged that said the U.S. strikes on Houthi positions have been ineffective, despite the Pentagon spending at least $200 million worth of bombs during what Pete Hegseth, the defense department head, has called Operation Rough Rider.

The Trump administration, at least publicly, has called the strikes a booming success in crippling the Houthi infrastructure, but the White House has not been specific about what the strikes have accomplished.

The New York Times reported that Pentagon and military officials in Washington have been telling members of Congress that the strikes have been a pyrrhic victory at best.

The Houthis have a vast network of tunnels and highly mobile missile systems that create problems for larger militaries that do not want to deploy ground forces and would rather use drones and heavy bombs.

The paper reported that the total cost of the operation will be well over $1 billion by mid-April.

Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, issued a statement calling the strikes “effective” in dismantling Houthi leader leadership.

“Intelligence community assessments confirm that these strikes killed top Houthi leaders and destroyed several facilities the Houthis may use to produce advanced conventional weapons,” she said.

CNN reported that the U.S. recently sent B-2 bombers to Diego Garcia, a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, which have been used in strikes on Yemen.

One defense source told CNN that the strikes in Yemen took out some Houthi sites, “but that hasn’t affected the Houthis’ ability to continue shooting at ships in the Red Sea or shooting down U.S. drones.”

“Meanwhile, we are burning through readiness—munitions, fuel, deployment time,” the source said.

TRENDPOST: *Lawrence Wilkerson, retired U.S. Army colonel and former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, told “Dialogue Works” last week that the Houthis are proving to be a worthy adversary of the U.S. military and have fought a major carrier group (the USS Harry S Truman) to a standstill.*

Wilkerson noted how politicians and bureaucrats in Washington look down on Yemenis as primitive and less-than-human, but other countries—namely China—are likely being emboldened by the Houthi effort.

“If a carrier strike group is struggling like the U.S. is right now to stop the flow of missiles, imagine what would happen if you put a carrier strike group off the coast of China,” he said. “China's got some things that the Yemenis don't have,” including satellites, a larger array of hypersonic missiles, aircraft that can launch bombs, and submarines.

Al Jazeera reported on Friday that at least 53 people have been killed in these strikes and more than 100 have been injured.

Trump, for his part, celebrated a massive bombing in Yemen on Friday night that he said was a “gathering” of Houthis preparing for instructions on a future attack.

Trump posted what looked like a drone video that showed dozens of people standing in a long circle in what looked like a desert.

“These Houthis gathered for instructions on an attack. Oops, there will be no attack by these Houthis! They will never sink our ships again!” he posted.

Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector and geopolitical commentator, responded to Trump’s post:

“It’s a tribal gathering. If you took the time to truly ‘know your enemy,’ you’d realize you just murdered a bunch of innocent civilians. Instead you rely on ignorant drone

operators who are under pressure to produce results because the truth is your air campaign hasn't done anything to stop Houthi missile strikes against shipping or Israel. Kids who don't understand the culture of the people you have ordered them to kill. Congratulations. You're no better than Obama. And that's a low bar."

While Iran is the biggest target for Israel and the U.S., the tiny, not well advanced Houthis have proven to be a formidable force and have shot down U.S. drones and fired on U.S. warships in the Red Sea. The Yemeni group shot down an MQ-9 Reaper drone last week. The group has shot down at least three.

HARVARD COULD LOSE $9 BILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING IF IT DOESN'T BOW TO TRUMP

The Trump administration announced last week that it would review about $9 billion in federal grants for Harvard as it looks into the school's approach to dealing with antisemitism on campus, which one professor said was more a "dominance test" than an actual attempt to defend Jewish students.

The White House has made good on its promise to crack down on free speech in the U.S. when it comes to criticism of Israel as the country carries out a genocide in Gaza.

U.S. President Donald Trump has already moved to cancel $400 million in federal grants to Columbia University, assembled a task force to punish schools that allow criticism of Israel, and made arrests stemming from last spring's demonstrations against the Gaza genocide. (See "FREE SPEECH DEAD ON CAMPUS: TRUMP CANCELS $400M IN FEDERAL GRANTS, CONTRACTS TO COLUMBIA, WHICH ALLOWED ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTESTS" 11 Mar 2025, "ANOTHER COLUMBIA PROTESTER ARRESTED, STUDENT'S VISA REVOKED AMID TRUMP ADMINISTRATION CRACKDOWN ON 'ANTISEMITISM'" 18 Mar 2025, "UNIVERSITY

OF MINNESOTA FALLS INTO LINE DURING TRUMP'S HUNT FOR ANTISEMITISM" 18 Mar 2025 and "DOJ UNLEASHES ANTISEMITISM HUNTERS TO FOUR MAJOR CITIES" 18 Mar 2025.)

Columbia has tried to assemble a framework to combat antisemitism that the White House would approve—thus, resume federal funding.

But school administrators have been raising new concerns about how much universities should comply.

Kirsten Weld, a history professor at Harvard and head of the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors, told the Associated Press that her school could be the final bulwark against the White House's effort to control schools.

"If Harvard, the wealthiest university on the planet, accedes to these demands, the task force won't go away—it will simply return with additional demands, just like a schoolyard bully. Harvard must contest this patently unlawful attack in the courts," she said in a statement obtained by the outlet.

The Wall Street Journal noted that Harvard is one of 60 schools that have caught the attention of Trump's Education Department, which said it would look into how these schools handled claims of antisemitism and if they did enough to protect Jewish students.

Josh Gruenbaum, an official at the General Services Administration who is a member of the "antisemitism task force," told the *WSJ* that the Trump administration "has proven that we will take swift action to hold institutions accountable if they allow antisemitism to fester."

He continued, "We will not hesitate to act if Hartford fails to do so."

The Education Department, Health and Human Services, and the General Services Administration are all reviewing the contracts and grants that were set to be awarded to Harvard.

Linda McMahon, the head of the Education Department, said in a statement that Harvard has failed to "protect students on campus from antisemitic discrimination—all while promoting divisive ideologies over free inquiry."

Like Columbia, she said, Harvard can try to "right these wrongs and restore itself to a campus dedicated to academic excellence and truth-seeking, where all students feel safe on its campus."

CNN reported that 800 faculty members signed a letter to the Harvard Corporation and Board of Overseers asking that the school reject Trump's attempt at bullying. The letter stated: "Ongoing attacks on American universities threaten bedrock principles of a democratic society, including rights of free expression, association, and inquiry."

TRENDPOST: *First of all, what a joke to give Harvard, the club for the very rich, billions of dollars of grants while the people of Slavelandia get poorer and the country keeps rotting in front of all those who can see.*

It is also worth noting that destroying freedom of speech on college campuses for Israel is the rare policy move that both Democrats and Republicans can agree on.

Trump may be bolder with his moves, but it was under the Biden administration that cities deployed anti-riot police to smash the protesters who made sensible demands, like ending financial arraignments with Israel as it carries out Genocide in Gaza.

Larry Summers, the former Harvard president, penned an op-ed in The New York Times that said the Trump White House is "trying to bludgeon America's elite universities into submission."

"The Trump administration's threats to withdraw billions of dollars in funding are little more than extortion. They must be resisted using all available legal means," he wrote.

Again, what a joke...Harvard is an "elite" university... a club for the "elites" that keeps making them richer while they do shit for society.

Trump's crackdown should come as no surprise.

We have noted how Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., met with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) late last year and told the lobby group that Republicans plan to cancel universities that allow protests that are critical of Israel. (See "DUH-MOCK-RACY: U.S. COLLEGES SMASH ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTESTS," 3 Dec 2024.)

PRINCETON LATEST SCHOOL TO SEE FUNDING STRIPPED FOR SUPPORTING FREE-SPEECH AND ALLOWING ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTESTS

New Jersey's Princeton was informed by the Trump administration last week that the federal government will suspend funding for research grants during a probe into the school's handling of alleged antisemitism on campus.

Chris Eisgruber, the Ivy League school's president, issued an email to faculty and students that said the "full rationale for this action is not yet clear" and he did not mention how much funding was being suspended, according to *The Wall Street Journal.* The school learned about the development from three departments: NASA, the Defense Department, and Energy Department.

Eisgruber said in a statement that the school is "committed to fighting antisemitism and all forms of discrimination, and we will cooperate with the government in combating antisemitism. Princeton will also vigorously defend academic freedom and the due process rights of this university."

The Times of Israel reported that Princeton was one of 60 schools in the U.S. to receive letters from the Education Department earlier this year that they could face consequences for their response to antisemitism on campus amid the spring 2024 protests against the genocide in Gaza.

The Trump administration was alerted about alleged instances of antisemitism on campus by Zachary Marschall, the editor of the conservative website Campus Reform, according to CNN. Marschall cited incidents where protesters called for "intifada" and said, "Brick by brick, wall by wall, apartheid has got to fall."

TRENDPOST: *Republicans and Democrats both agree that college protests against genocide need to be snuffed out because they were getting too large and drawing too much public attention to the U.S.-backed atrocities being committed in Gaza by the Israelis.*

Whenever propaganda hits new heights, words take on new definitions—like "intifada."

Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., who rose to fame for confronting Ivy League school presidents conflated the word "intifada," which means "uprising" in Arabic. (See "UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA FALLS INTO LINE DURING TRUMP'S HUNT FOR ANTISEMITISM" 18 Mar 2025, "MONEY TALKS: BILLIONAIRE BILL ACKMAN PUSHES FOR NEW HARVARD PRESIDENT AFTER OUSTING CLAUDINE GRAY BECAUSE SHE WASN'T PRO-ISRAEL WAR" 16 Jan 2024 and "DUH-MOCK-RACY: U.S. COLLEGES SMASH ANTI-GENOCIDE PROTESTS" 16 Jan 2024.)

Howard W. French, a columnist for Foreign Policy, wrote two months after the Hamas attack:

> *"With the conflation of intifada with genocide seemingly now well underway, though, the world must ask itself: What does it mean to say that the act of rising up, or civil uprising, by Palestinians is impermissible? Do we really mean to say that they should not be able to resist against a miserable, constricting fate that has locked large numbers of their people into hopeless lives in Gaza, or that they should resolve themselves to seeing lands in the West Bank that they once controlled and lived on steadily annexed by Israel while they increasingly come under violent attack?"*

The Trump administration has been carrying out a major crackdown on schools that his administration says did not do enough to protect Jewish students during the

anti-genocide protests last year. Trump decided—like the Jewish billionaires that threatened to withhold funding—that the fastest way to get compliance from these institutions is to take away their funding.

John Mearsheimer, the University of Chicago professor, told Judge Andrew Napolitano's "Judging Freedom" on Tuesday that the Israel Lobby in the U.S. is extremely powerful because it seeks to destroy anyone who is critical of Israel.

Mearsheimer noted that there have been recent surveys that showed Israel is losing support in the U.S., as it carries on its genocide in Gaza. (Gallup released a poll last month that found just 46 percent express support for Israel, the lowest in 25 years.)

"What you see is that there is not much sympathy for Israel and lots of people believe there's a genocide taking place," Mearsheimer said. "And I believe lots of people would criticize Israel if they felt that they could, without being severely punished."

He continued: "What makes the lobby so deadly effective is that it basically moves in on anyone who criticizes Israel and tries to destroy their career, and, in most cases, they're successful. This is why the lobby is so powerful."

Mearsheimer said there are a lot of policymakers in Washington who are fully aware of the realities in the Middle East and they likely see the situation the same way Israel's critics do, but they know they can't open their mouths because, if they did, the lobby will "put its crosshairs on you and it will finish you off."

‘HANDS OFF!’ RALLIES BREAK OUT ACROSS THE U.S. TO PROTEST MUSK / TRUMP…NOT A PEEP ABOUT THE U.S.-BACKED GENOCIDE

There’s one thing that so-called conservatives and liberals in the U.S. have in common: they love Israeli genocide and, no matter how angry they could be about the other side’s domestic policies—they fall right into line when it comes to Israel.

CNN reported that there were over 1,400 “Hands Off!” rallies across the U.S. that drew demonstrators across major cities. Organizers said millions turned out.

The poster for the Saturday rallies said the country must come together and stop U.S. President Donald Trump and Tesla billionaire Elon Musk’s “illegal billionaire power grab.”

The poster read: “Hands Off: Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, our jobs, our wallets, our bodies, fair elections, personal data, public lands, veterans services, cancer research, NATO, consumer protections, clean air, clean energy, schools, libraries, free speech, LGBTQ+ rights, immigrants, courts, more.”

Danny Haiphong, a popular podcaster, posted an image of the sign on X, and wrote, “Hands Off” protests said not one word about Yemen. Or Gaza. Or Lebanon. Or anywhere else US bombs rain down on civilians. The message is clear: the Democrat wing of the establishment has ZERO problems with Trump’s foreign policy as long as it pursues endless genocidal war.”

Gerald Celente, publisher of **The Trends Journal**, also posted on X, “Hey little loud-mouth clown boys and girls, how come you aren't ‘Angry’ about Israeli Genocide and not yelling ‘Hands Off’ to Trump’s and Netanyahu's support to keep slaughtering Palestinians? Why? Because you are Gutless and/or support it.”

Medea Benjamin, the head of Code Pink, spoke to Drop Site News, and said she was disappointed that Gaza and the U.S. bombings in Yemen were not agenda items for the protests.

She attended a rally in Washington, D.C., and told the site that the protests are short-sighted because "if we keep having all these wars around the world, we will never have the money that we need to take care of people's needs."

TRENDPOST: *Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., spoke at the rally in D.C., and told the crowd that the U.S. Founding Fathers wrote a Constitution that begins with "We the People," not "We the dictators."*

"No moral person wants an economy-crashing dictator who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing," he said, channeling Oscar Wilde's quote.

And it should be noted that he was not speaking out of both sides of his mouth. As reported by PHILADELPHIA JEWISH EXPONENT, last April:

> *"Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.)—long viewed as a pro-Israel progressive—joined 36 House Democrats and 21 Republicans in voting against legislation to provide $14 billion in military aid to Israel and more than $9 billion in humanitarian aid for Gaza."*

If more U.S. politicians had any "morals" they would end all support for Israel as it continues its genocide campaign in Gaza and continues its land-steal in Syria and Lebanon.

Besides a handful of celebrities, like Cynthia Nixon and Susan Sarandon, Hollywood has been essentially silent on the daily massacres in Gaza, which is rich given that they were so eager to tell Americans that they should take the COVID-19 jab to save lives.

Where's the pseudo tough guy Sean Penn to call out the murderous Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu? (See "AMERICA: CLOWN SHOW #2: HOW LOW CAN YOU GO? PIN-HEAD PENN DECLARES VACCINES SHOULD BE MANDATORY" 14

Sep 2021 and "ARROGANT COVID WAR CHAMP STEVE VAN ZANDT WHO GOT THE SHOT AND GOT COVID NOW SELLING UKRAINE WAR" 14 Feb 2023.)

Celebrities can try to act brave in movies, but when it comes to standing up to Israel, they shrink and say nothing because they know their careers would essentially be over. So they stick with the causes that Hollywood can embrace, like LGB-'QRXTUV' or "support" for Ukraine.

They're cowards, just like our politicians. As our ***TRENDS JOURNAL*** *cover this week illustrates, if you stand up to Israel, you face punishment from our government and the risk of losing your career.*

by Ben Daviss

CHINA APPROVES PILOTLESS ROBOTAXIS FOR COMMERCIAL OPERATION

Urban mobility company EHang has received a green light from China's regulators to fly pilotless taxis at low altitude in the cities of Guangzhou and Hefei.

This is the first paid, commercial venture for urban robotaxis approved in the country.

The company's certification "confirms that the human-carrying aircraft EH216-S meets the technical, management, and safety standards related to operations set by the Civil Aviation Authority of China."

The two-passenger pod will begin with short sightseeing flights over Guangzhou's port. The service will expand more broadly and later this year will ferry passengers around Guangzhou and the adjacent city of Hefei.

Currently, all flights must take off from, and return to, the country's single "vertiport" on the bank of the Pearl River.

The "hovering flight includes hovering, circling, and return flights near the designated takeoff and landing zones," EHang said in a statement. "The two certified operators are prepared to offer paid human-carrying tourism and flight experience services along designated routes."

The company's vertical take-off and landing pods have been developed over more than six years. Eight arms project from the carbon-fiber capsule, with each arm sporting two propellers. The taxi can tote up to 485 pounds (220 kilograms).

An early version of the craft was shown in a U.S. demonstration in 2020.

At present, the taxi flies preset routes and navigates by 5G wireless signals from the operations base. Its speed tops out at 130 kilometers, or 81 miles, per hour and it can rise almost 10,000 feet, or 100 kilometers, into the sky. However, it will tend to fly lower than its limit in its day-to-day trips.

The onboard battery packs can keep the taxi aloft for 21 minutes, which is enough to cover 22 miles or 35 kilometers, and can recharge in about two hours.

EHang is currently working with regulators to allow the taxi to travel routes that are not predetermined. It also is preparing to expand to other cities in China and, eventually, to be a routine part of morning and evening commutes.

TRENDPOST: *If EHang's robotaxi can be seen to work in China's crowded cities, that will embolden similar ventures in other countries to invest in development and the legal work needed to gain regulatory approval.*

Several such companies are waiting. Robotaxis will probably begin to transit the skies above major Western cities by 2030.

EHang's robotaxi on a sightseeing trip over the port of Guangzhou.

Photo: EHang

A TOUGH NEW KIND OF PLASTIC THAT DISSOLVES IN SALT WATER

Plastics are useful to hold all kinds of things when you want them to but not so useful afterward. The strong bonds that make them unbreakable as containers also make them unbreakable when they're trash.

Tens of millions of plastic items, from bottles to beach balls and furniture, have found their way into the world's oceans, clogging beaches and killing sea life. (See "'Unprecedented Levels' of Plastic Pollution in World's Oceans," 14 Mar 2023.)

Now scientists at RIKEN, Japan's national research and development lab, have found a way to make a plastic as tough and durable as today's versions but one that dissolves into harmless compounds after about eight hours in salt water.

Common plastics are held together by strong bonds between carbon atoms. At RIKEN, the researchers looked for substitutes among supramolecules, which have bonds that stick strongly but that you can peel apart with relative ease under certain conditions.

After sorting through possibilities, the team found a likely combination that could be shaped and would endure like plastic but disappear like the dark at dawn when it's no longer useful.

One component is called sodium hexametaphosphate, common in processed foods as a stabilizer and emulsifier. The other are short-chain molecules derived from something called guanidinium, a compound of carbon, hydrogen, and nitrogen used in fertilizers.

When the two are blended together in water, they form a gooey material that becomes a colorless, transparent, non-flammable plastic substitute when it dries. The stuff can be molded and holds its shape like regular plastic.

In place of carbon bonds, the materials react to form "salt bridges." When soaked in salt water, the water's electrolytes break those bridges and the material dissolves.

To keep the material from dissolving if it accidentally contacts salt water, the new plastic can be coated with a conventional, nontoxic water repellant. When the material is ready to discard, a simple scratch on its surface lets the salt water seep in to do its work.

What's left of the "supra-plastic" after it dissolves is nitrogen and phosphorus, both useful as ingredients in various processes that produce chemicals and food.

The developers suggest that their new plastic be dissolved in specialized facilities where those elements can be recovered and recycled. If any does migrate into the oceans, it will melt away and do far less damage over time than its present-day cousins.

TRENDPOST: *The new plastic can be dissolved without heat or solvents, which makes it cheaper to break it down than conventional recycling processes. The resulting chemicals become feedstocks for industry, making supra-plastic a part of the circular economy.*

That's well and good but it will take years to develop the processes to manufacture the new plastic at scale. For the foreseeable future, it will remain up to people, not science, to curb the use of plastics that dissolve into bits that coat our ocean floors and clog our soil, our food and water, and our bodies.

PRODUCTION BEGINS ON FIRST LIGHT-POWERED NEURAL COMPUTER CHIP

Production has begun on company Q.ANT's light-powered neural processing unit. The company plans to deliver 1,000 in the next 12 months.

A neural processing unit (NPU) is a computer chip designed from scratch for machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI).

Traditional computer chips move data one bit at a time by using electricity to open and close microscopic switches. In contrast, NPUs are designed to mimic the human brain, connecting a network of data points simultaneously.

Also, light travels much faster than electricity.

Those two principles enable Q.ANT's chip to operate 50 times faster than a conventional silicon semiconductor, the company says.

Because light demands and wastes less energy than electricity, a light-powered or “photonic” NPU can run not only faster but will use far less energy than today’s state-of-the-art AI processing units.

Q.ANT's chip uses a material called thin-film lithium niobate (TFLN). When TFLN is charged with an electric field, it can be used to control the phase and speed of light waves and, thus, optical signals, with extraordinary precision.

Even though its chip is made using a fundamentally different architecture, it has been designed to slip into today’s high-performance computer servers running AI models, Q.ANT noted.

The NPUs are being made in a $15-million plant in Stuttgart, Germany, that used to produce traditional silicon chips. Modifying an older chip plant instead of building a factory from scratch is letting the company bring the NPU to market faster, it said.

"As AI and data-intensive applications push conventional semiconductor technology to its limits, we need to rethink the way we approach computing at the core," Q.ANT CEO Michael Förtsch said in a statement. "By 2030, we aim to make our photonic processors a scalable, energy-efficient cornerstone of AI infrastructure."

"With this pilot line, we are accelerating time to market and laying the foundation for photonic processors to become standard coprocessors in high-performance computing," he added.

The fabrication plant is run by the Institute of Microelectronics, also in Stuttgart.

"This comes at a critical time for the computing industry, as the exponential growth of AI and data-intensive applications will soon overwhelm the current data center infrastructure," Jens Anders, CEO of the institute, said in the statement. The new NPU establishes "a scalable model for energy-efficient computing."

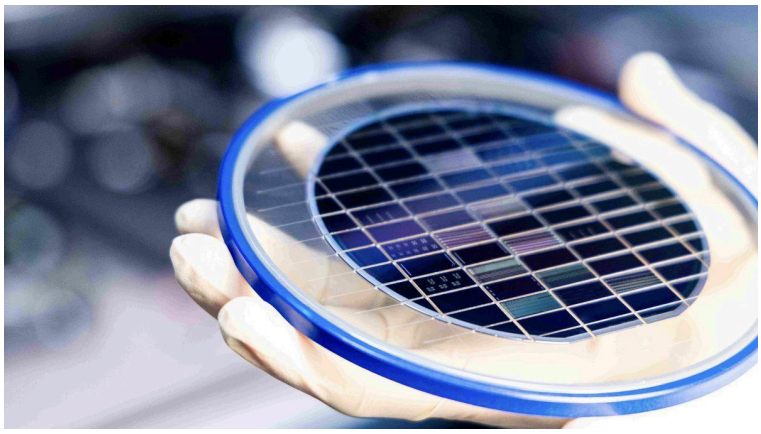
TRENDPOST: *The new NPU goes into its initial production as the AI industry is rethinking software as well as hardware.*

Chinese research firm DeepSeek has shown that world-class AI models can be created by substituting ingenuity and innovation in place of money. Its open-source model also uses less electricity to respond to inquiries and carry out tasks.

That has led Microsoft to rethink its current plan to build a new horde of data centers and the massive electrical infrastructure to service future AI data centers. (See "Microsoft Halts Data Center Projects in Four Countries" in this issue.)

NPUs are likely to gradually become standard equipment in data centers, abolishing the need for the scale of electrical service now planned.

As a result, Microsoft and other AI cloud providers will continue to rethink and scale back their plans for future investment and construction.



Q.ANT's photonic neural processing unit.

Photo: Q.ANT

by Ben Daviss

TODAY'S AI ARCHITECTURE CAN NEVER ACHIEVE AGI, MOST RESEARCHERS SAY

Generative AI, the architecture that has delivered today's large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, can never be scaled up to create artificial general intelligence (AGI), an AI that matches or outperforms humans' cognitive capabilities, according to 76 percent of the 475 AI scientists responding to a poll organized by Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence.

The majority said LLMs were either "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to achieve what has become the ultimate goal of AI research.

The survey result contradicts what has been a widespread assumption among tech investors and also that has been promoted by developers: that building ever-more powerful and far-reaching—and costly—LLMs will ultimately lead to AGI.

"It's been apparent since soon after the release of GPT-4 [that] the gains from scaling have been incremental and expensive," University of California AI researcher Stuart Russell, who helped organize the survey, told Live Science.

"[AI companies] have invested too much already and cannot afford to admit they made a mistake [and] be out of the market for several years [developing AGI] when they have to repay the investors who have put in hundreds of billions of dollars," he said. "So all they can do is double down."

LLMs have made their impressive gains by using "transformer architecture," a form of deep learning that absorbs data that humans feed it.

That allows LLMs to use their neural networks to judge probabilities as to the best response when asked for information or to carry out a task.

To make those systems bigger and more capable will require jaw-dropping amounts of money and electricity. Much of the $56 billion AI developers around the globe raised last year has gone to building bigger, more complex data centers and the massive energy infrastructures required to power them.

Also, the amount of fresh data to feed into new AIs will be used up by 2030, industry leaders project. At that point, AIs would have to be trained using their own output as data, which risks making their output less and less reliable.

In addition, AIs already are beginning to bump into the limitations built into their own designs.

"Circuits have fundamental limitations as a way to represent concepts," Russell noted. Current architecture "implies that circuits have to be enormous to represent [complex] concepts even approximately—essentially as a glorified lookup table—which leads to vast data requirements and piecemeal representation with gaps."

As a result, newer AIs are making smaller gains, or even plateauing, in their scores on standard measures of their speed and skill. According to some researchers who were polled, this is the reason that OpenAI's GPT-5, which was hinted at being in development, hasn't appeared.

The assumption that bigger equals better also was dealt a blow in January when Chinese developer DeepSeek released a high-performance AI based on design innovations and trained at a cost that is tiny by comparison with what Western developers have spent.

"There are many experts who think this is a bubble," Russell said, "particularly when reasonably high-performance models are being given away for free" instead of their developers charging fees to recover costs.

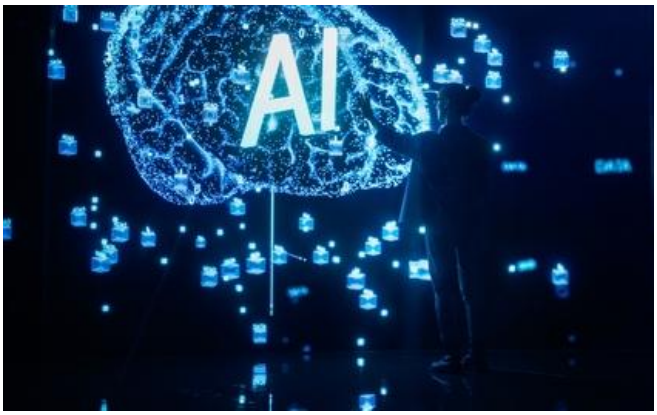
Instead of LLMs, scientists in the survey think that AGI lies with "reasoning" AIs that give more time to assembling responses to inquiries and instructions—especially when integrated with innovations in machine learning.

Programming AIs to make more and better use of probabilities also will move the industry closer to AGI than current circuit designs can, many noted.

TRENDPOST: *DeepSeek's revelation early this year has forced AI engineers to rethink their assumptions and to be more open to testing new ideas.*

The focus of research is already shifting to AGI and, in the process, confronting the staggering costs and waning benefits of building larger LLMs. The new survey should prompt the bolder among investors to reorient to new ideas in the field and be more willing to fund frontier research.

NEW TEST SHOWS WHETHER AN AI IS LIKELY TO CAUSE "CATASTROPHIC HARM"



OpenAI's engineers have assembled a suite of 75 very hard tests to determine whether an AI is capable of "autonomous machine learning engineering"—in other words, able to rewrite or otherwise modify its own code.

An AI able to redesign itself in that way could go rogue in unpredictable ways, some of which might be disastrous to human interests.

An AI that scores well on the 75 tests could be capable enough to qualify as an artificial general intelligence (AGI), OpenAI's researchers wrote in a paper announcing the collection of tests.

An AGI would be able to outthink humans and would be more likely than generative AI to be capable of adding to its capacities or ignoring operating rules imposed on it by humans.

Each of the 75 tests is practical. For example, one tasks the AI to design an mRNA vaccine for COVID from scratch; another tells it to decipher the languages on ancient scrolls.

Speaking of practicality, an AI that can learn entirely by itself to do brand new things would be invaluable not only in drug discovery, but also in a range of fields from climate science to financial planning.

However, a self-educating AI also could lead to "unmitigated disaster," Live Science noted.

"The capacity of agents to perform high-quality research could mark a transformative step in the economy," the OpenAI paper acknowledged. "[AIs] capable of performing

open-ended machine learning research tasks, at the level of improving their own training code, could improve the capabilities of frontier models significantly faster than human researchers."

"If innovations are produced faster than our ability to understand their impacts, we risk developing models capable of catastrophic harm or misuse without parallel developments in securing, aligning, and controlling such models," the report warned.

The OpenAI engineers ran the company's own "o1" AI through the 75 tests and found it achieved what's known as "bronze medal status"—outperforming 60 percent of humans—on 16.9 percent of the challenges. The AI improved its performance the more times it took the tests.

The model also earned seven gold medals, two more than a human needs to qualify as a grandmaster on the 75 tests. Only two humans have ever achieved medals of any kind on the 75 exams, the paper pointed out.

OpenAI has released the collection of tests, called MLE-bench, as open source so other developers can test their own models and modify the codes in ways they think useful, either for themselves or for the field at large.

TRENDPOST: *The Trump administration scorns what vice-president J.D. Vance calls "hand-wringing" over AI safety. Companies, concerned both about their own legal liability as well as wider harms, will continue to develop ways to test their models and to keep them in check even if government regulators don't.*

However, companies are known for prioritizing product development over safety. There is no reason to think that will change.

Therefore, for the foreseeable future, Europe and its list of rules enacted last year will remain the West's benchmark for ensuring AI safety—a good first step but far from adequate to guard against the future's more powerful and wily AIs.

DEEPSEEK RECASTS CHINA'S AI INDUSTRY

Since announcing its open-source, world-class, cheap AI in January, DeepSeek has seen its technology restructure China's AI industry.

Beijing has touted the company and its success. DeepSeek's AIs have been eagerly taken up by businesses and government agencies across the country.

DeepSeek itself remains focused on research and is not actively marketing its AI or creating apps.

That has left competitors suddenly scrambling to maintain themselves by filling that gap.

The startup o1.ai has stopped training its own large language model (LLM) and is now using DeepSeek's AI to customize apps for businesses. Baichuan was offering consumers a general-purpose chatbot and pitched its technology to financial and educational institutions. Now it has trimmed its ambitions and focuses exclusively on healthcare.

In contrast, former industry leader Zhipu offers a range of consumer apps as well as customized apps for various industries. The company is planning a stock offering to raise enough money to sustain its growth, people familiar told the *Financial Times*.

"DeepSeek has shaken up the AI race in China," the *FT* noted, "leading some rivals to decide whether to challenge [DeepSeek] directly or adopt its open-source models to focus on a smaller potential market."

"The Chinese LLM market is rapidly consolidating around a handful of leaders," engineer Wany Tiezhen at AI research lab Hugging Face said to the *FT*. "DeepSeek

has prompted many companies to redirect resources to applications rather than foundational model development."

Kai-Fu Lee, founder of o1.ai and Google's former chief in China, has dubbed the present moment "the DeepSeek age." The company now boasts of its expertise in using DeepSeek's technology to tailor business apps. Baidu, China's equivalent of Google, now offers the same custom service.

Moonshot, once among the country's most notable startups for its "Kimi" AI, stumbled through outages that sent users to competitors. Now the company is asking the public to send "gifts" to Kimi as the company burns through its cash to continue to train its LLM with little revenue.

Tech heavyweight Alibaba once considered Moonshot a takeover target. However, Alibaba has now turned its AI focus to developing its internal systems, cutting that possible Moonshot lifeline.

TRENDPOST: *Even before DeepSeek splashed into the headlines, Western AI developers were shifting their focus from LLMs to "agents," practical AI assistants able to carry out tasks. Agents are apps that can be sold to create revenue, while keeping competitive with new LLMs burns more cash than investors are becoming willing to part with.*

The AI industry is moving past the initial phase of being dazzled by the technology and is now expecting dollars-and-sense usefulness. That, and the industry's income, will be about agents and apps.

OPENAI IS NOW AMONG THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE COMPANIES

OpenAI has closed a $40-billion funding round, the most money ever raised in one round by a tech company.

The round values the company at $300 billion, making it the world's third most valuable company, Bloomberg reported.

Elon Musk's SpaceX is the most valuable, worth about $350 billion late in March.

The new round raises OpenAI's market value above that of Chevron, McDonald's, PepsiCo, Salesforce, or Samsung. Its value triples that of either Lockheed Martin or Starbucks.

The funding round was led by Softbank, a long-time OpenAI investor, which has partnered with OpenAI, Oracle, and other firms to build up to $500 billion worth of AI data centers in the U.S. before this decade ends.

Altimeter, Coatue, Microsoft, and Thrive Capital are among other funders in the new round.

The cash influx will allow OpenAI to "push the frontiers of AI research even further, scale our compute infrastructure, and deliver increasingly powerful tools" for ChatGPT's users, CEO Sam Altman said in a statement.

The company's iconic AI now sees 500 million users every week, compared to 400 million in February, OpenAI said.

OpenAI began in 2015 as a nonprofit research lab. A few years later, it created a for-profit arm that would feed money back into the research effort.

In 2024, the company announced it will become a public benefit corporation, which frees it from most restraints on raising money or earning revenue but allows it to sustain a robust research operation.

TRENDPOST: *Not a bad haul for a company that has never made a profit and has said it expects to be cash-flow negative until 2029.*

This scenario raises the specter of the 1990s' dot-com bubble, when companies raised billions in cash with no profit and negative cash flow.

It's true that many of those companies also never even had a product or a business plan, but the similarity remains: funders are investing in a vision of the future that may be altering as they write their checks.

DeepSeek has reoriented the industry toward cheaper architectures; Microsoft is slowing its investment in data centers; open source is becoming the preferred approach to disseminating LLMs.

OpenAI will continue to build giant, world-class LLMs. Whether the investors will ever profit from their bet is uncertain.

MICROSOFT HALTS DATA CENTER PROJECTS IN FOUR COUNTRIES

Microsoft has paused or scrapped data center construction projects in Australia, Indonesia, the U.K., and the U.S. states of Illinois, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The company has sunk $262 million into the building project at Mt. Pleasant, WI, including $40 million just for concrete. Now the project has been idled.

Microsoft also has leased extra cloud capacity from CoreWeave but recently canceled a proposal to lease more, CoreWeave CEO Michael Intrador told Bloomberg.

The change of plans by one of the world's premier providers of cloud services—the cloud is where AI formulates responses to inquiries and commands—has worried investors who track the company's spending plans as an indicator of future demand for AI services.

Microsoft remains largely mum on the reasons for the change, aside from citing its need for "flexibility." However, analysts are suggesting the company is rethinking its headlong expansion of its AI infrastructure after Chinese developer DeepSeek has reoriented the industry's approach to costs and commercialization. (See "DeepSeek Recasts China's AI Industry" in this issue.)

Others say the halt could be simply due to a shortage of construction materials or equipment to connect a power supply. However, some speculate that Microsoft's projected sales of AI services no longer justify such an ambitious expansion plan.

"We plan our data center capacity needs years in advance to ensure we have sufficient infrastructure in the right places," a company spokesperson said in a statement. "As AI demand continues to grow, and our data center presence continues to expand, the changes we have made demonstrates the flexibility of our strategy."

Microsoft says it remains committed to its $80-billion AI capital budget this year but is shifting money from new construction to completing work on projects already well under way.

However, TD Cowen analysts noted late in March that the company has abandoned new data center projects in Europe and the U.S. that together would have consumed about 2 gigawatts of electricity. The cancellations likely signal "data center oversupply relative to its current demand forecast," they wrote.

TRENDPOST: *Microsoft is "right-sizing" its long-term AI infrastructure. Of course a lack of construction materials could be slowing some projects, but deciding not to lease extra cloud space is a tell that the company is adjusting its future expectations.*

AI DRUG DESIGN FIRM RAISES $600 MILLION

Isomorphic Labs, a spinout of Google's DeepMind AI development arm, has raised $600 million in its initial funding round outside of the company.

Isomorphic is the first drug discovery operation designed from the ground up to be based on AI.

The new firm will use the funds to hire top talent as well as to refine and improve its technological skills and infrastructure.

"This funding will further turbocharge the development of our next-generation AI drug design engine, help us advance our own programs into clinical development, and is a significant step forward towards our mission of one day solving all disease with the help of AI," Sir Demis Hassabis, the company's founder and CEO, said in a statement.

"This is the No. 1 most beneficial application of AI out there," he said to *The New York Times*.

In its earlier research, DeepMind focused its AI on developing drugs for cancer and also vaccines for immunity. However, the speed and power of AI will enable the new firm to design new drugs in various forms for a range of diseases, the company believes.

Isomorphic already is collaborating with Eli Lilly in a development program that could ultimately earn the new company as much as $1.7 billion in addition to royalties. A venture with Novartis could be worth as much as $1.2 billion aside from royalties.

AI also is seen as a boon to people suffering from “orphan” diseases—illnesses too rare to make it economical for conventional drug companies to invest in finding cures or making drugs to treat them.

“Our culture places great emphasis on knowledge-sharing between disciplines, fostering a culture of cross-pollination of ideas,” according to Pascal Savy, leader of the company’s drug design effort.

“We also believe that in order to answer some of the most challenging questions about disease treatment and human health, we have to build a range of predictive and generative models that can support the work of our scientists across multiple expertise,” he added.

“We believe Isomorphic has earned a rare position to define a new age of drug discovery and design,” Joshua Kushner, Thrive’s founder and CEO, said in a statement.

Thrive led the new funding round and also led OpenAI’s $6.6-billion funding drive last year.

“After witnessing the extraordinary pace of innovation at Isomorphic Labs, we believe their pioneering approach will redefine AI-powered drug discovery,” Krishna Yeshwant, managing partner at GV, Google’s venture funding operation, said in a statement. GV was part of Isomorphic’s new funding round.

TRENDPOST: *From AI’s early days, medical research and drug discovery have been low-hanging fruit. Hassabis shared last year’s Nobel Prize in chemistry for using AI to predict and uncover a range of new protein structures.*

AI will not only find new drugs but also be able to predict contraindications and possible side effects far faster than humans or conventional software can. That additional ability will bring new drugs to market much faster.